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MANUAL
OF
SOLID PIETY

THE APPROBATION OF HIS EMINENCE
M^{OR} VICTOR-AUGUSTE DESCHAMPS

ARCHBISHOP OF MALINES, PRIMATE OF BELGIUM

We approve of this Manual of Solid Piety by Rev. Fr. VERCROYSE as we have also approved of his Practical Meditations on which this Manual is based, and of which it is a reproduction adapted for the use of those in the world who aspire to Christian perfection. We have full confidence that these meditations will be blessed as were the first (1).

Rome May 1st. 1870.

VICTOR-AUGUSTE, Archbishop of Malines.

TEXT OF THE APPROBATION

which His Eminence here refers to.

These Meditations by the Rev. Fr. VERCROYSE of the Society of Jesus are distinguished by soundness of doctrine, by an appropriate choice of subjects, and by the unction of piety. Their use cannot fail to be of great benefit to religious communities, to the clergy and to those in the world who aspire to perfection. We therefore willingly approve of the publication of this work, and we are pleased to be able thus to manifest our esteem for the pious author.

Brussels January 10th. 1868.

VICTOR-AUGUSTE, Archbishop of Malines.

NIHIL OBSTAT

J.-N. STRASSMAIER, S. J.
Censor deputatus.

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DE LICENTIA SUPERIORUM ORDINIS

(1) Allusion to the various translations which have been called for.

MANUAL
OF
SOLID PIETY

OR
NEW PRACTICAL MEDITATIONS

for every day in the Year

ON THE LIFE OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST

by
Father BRUNO VERCRUYSSÉ, S. J.

TRANSLATION FROM THE FRENCH OF THE 20th. EDITION

A work enriched by several Novenas and Octaves; meditations for the first Fridays of the month, and for days of Communion, a new method of hearing Mass, and practical remarks on the different parts of the meditation

*« Our chief study should be to meditate
» upon the life of our Lord Jesus Christ. »*

(IMITATION, BOOK I, CHAP. I.)

First Volume
FROM JANUARY 1st. TO JUNE 30th.



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AUTHOR'S PREFACE

In the approbation given by His Eminence Mgr. Victor Deschamps to the *New Practical Meditations* published by me in 1867 he says :

Their use cannot fail to be of great service to religious communities, to the clergy, and to those in the world who aspire to perfection.

Influenced by these words of the august prelate, many pious people procured the book of *New Meditations* ; but they were not slow to perceive that its use would be of infinitely more service to them if the practical part of the work, written principally for religious houses, were more directly adapted to their position in the world.

During the last ten years various requests of this nature have reached me. To satisfy such legitimate desires, I have again gladly taken up my task, and now that it is concluded, I am pleased to believe that the *Manual of Solid Piety* will fully satisfy the wishes which have been expressed to me. To this end I have spared neither labour nor time.

May it please Heaven to fulfil the anticipations expressed in these words of our venerable Archbishop added to his approbation :

We have full confidence that these meditations will be blessed as were the first... (1).

That is, that being distributed amongst the faithful, they will bring forth fruit in their souls, will encourage them to aim at Christian perfection, and will help them to attain it.

This is the sole recompense I desire.

(1) Allusion to the very favorable reception of the *New Practical Meditations* of which more than 8500 copies of the French, Flemish, English and German editions were called for in less than three years.

EXTRACT FROM THE NOTICE

IN THE FIRST EDITION

of the Practical Meditations.

*(Recommended to be read, for the proper understanding
of the Manual.)*

In these new Practical Meditations which I offer to religious communities, I have introduced certain innovations, the usefulness of which I think will not be questioned.

In the first place, as regards order of time. I have not followed that of Sundays or weeks, nor that of the calendar, on account of the great inconveniences attached to both of these systems.

I have planned and adopted a new combination which includes the merits of both systems without their defects.

I have divided the whole work into two volumes, each one including six months; from January to June, and from July to December.

The first volume follows the order of the calendar till February 4th. the earliest date on which Ash Wednesday, the beginning of Lent can fall. From that date, it follows the order of Sundays or weeks till the Feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

As however Ash Wednesday, and the Feast of the Sacred Heart which depends on it, may fall thirty-three days later, I have added to the end of the first volume an intercalary month of thirty-three Meditations, of which one portion can be used before Ash Wednesday, and the other after the Feast of the Sacred Heart; so as to complete in any case the number of days of the first half-year. In the present year, (1871) for example, as Ash Wednesday falls on February 22nd. and the Feast of the Sacred Heart on June 16th. nineteen Meditations may be taken from the intercalary month; the last fourteen being used after the Feast of the Sacred Heart. (See note in this volume, p. 131.)

The second volume follows throughout the order of the calendar.

In setting out the order of subjects, I did not feel bound to follow in the footsteps of those who, having taken as I have, the life of Our Lord Jesus Christ as the subject of their meditations, have thought they were not at liberty to go outside this theme. Convinced that variety pleases in all things and arrests attention, I have at times interrupted the sequence of the Gospel narrative by meditations on the

moral virtues, on the lives of certain Saints, and on the principal Feasts of the year. Some are also preceded by a Novena, or followed by an Octave, all of which are entirely new.

The holy season of Lent is exclusively dedicated to the remembrance of the sorrowful Passion of Jesus Christ. Nevertheless I have believed it to be consonant with the spirit of the Church to give a meditation for every Monday on the reasons for penance and the manner of performing it.

At the end of each volume I have added a Meditation for each *First Friday* in the month, consecrated to the devotion of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, with others for days of Communion.

The uniform manner in which I have set out the points of the Meditations, has been chosen because it has seemed the most natural.

I have limited myself to brief indications of the *affections* and *resolutions*; many others naturally will occur in the course of meditation; they will be so much the better coming from the depths of the heart or from Divine inspiration.

I trust that approval will be given to the rule I have followed of adhering to the actual text of the Holy Scriptures according to the best commentators, of avoiding strained or unnatural applications, and of showing as far as these brief Meditations permit, the connected history of the life and actions of Our Lord Jesus Christ.

Notes will be found in the course of the work which advantageously take the place of longer explanations on the subject of what to avoid and what to do in order to meditate well and profitably, and to ensure a good result from the meditation.

Nothing more remains for me but to ask of the Infinite Goodness of God that His most abundant blessings may be poured on all those who use this book of meditations, and of its users, that its author may not be forgotten in their prayers.

EXTRACTS
FROM THE LETTERS OF THE VERY REVEREND FATHER GENERAL
OF THE SOCIETY OF JESUS, TO THE AUTHOR
OF THE NEW PRACTICAL MEDITATIONS,
the substance
of which is contained in the Manual of Solid Piety.
(Translation from the Latin.)

Rome. Oct. 15th. 1859.

Reverend Father,

The peace of Our Lord be with you. — I have received your welcome letter of August 13th. enclosing specimens of the Meditations. I learn with pleasure that you wish to consecrate your remaining strength and time to a work which will be of more than ordinary usefulness. I urge you therefore to continue confidently what you have so well commenced.

The method followed in the development of the Points has my full approval, and I do not doubt that it will also please others. May God grant you the strength and grace to accomplish what you have undertaken for His greater glory.

Yours, etc.

PIERRE BECKX, S. J.

Rome. May 2nd. 1863.

Reverend Father,

The peace of Our Lord be with you. — As far as I can judge by various extracts from your meditations, I believe and hope that some day they will be productive of great spiritual good. Persevere then, Reverend Father, and with the enlightenment and help of grace complete the work you have undertaken.

Rome. November 17th. 1870.

Reverend Father,

The peace of Our Lord be with you. — I congratulate you on the success which your book of Meditations has obtained, and which has made it necessary for you to prepare a third edition. From what you tell me the trouble you have taken to make numerous improvements in it, gives good reason for the hope that its fruit will be all the more abundant. I pray that our Lord may enlighten and sustain you, and preserve your health, so that you may from a full heart give to a work of such great importance the highest possible degree of perfection.

PIERRE BECKX, S. J.

METHOD OF HEARING THE HOLY MASS

or Pious Practices

WHICH WILL ASSIST IN THE HEARING OF MASS
WITH FULL BENEFIT

Instead of inserting the prayers of the Mass in this work as is customary in books of meditations, it has seemed to me more useful to suggest to tho pious, counsels which will help them, I venture to hope, to assist at the Holy Sacrifice with great benefit every day, even when they have no prayer-book, nor any other time than that of the Mass itself for making their daily meditation. These counsels can moreover be easily followed, it being sufficient to acquire the habit of certain considerations or practices BEFORE, DURING, and AFTER the Holy Mass.

Before Mass.

On the way to church, think that you are going to Calvary where there awaits you the greatest, the most touching spectacle that can be imagined, the spectacle of a God made Man sacrificing Himself on a Cross, lifted up between heaven and earth, to reconcile earth with heaven and men with God. Think and believe with lively faith that the Sacrifice of the Mass is the renewal of the sacrifice of the Cross, or rather that it is, as expressed by the Council of Trent : *the same sacrifice, with the only difference that on the altar it is accomplished without the shedding of blood, and consequently produces the same effects since it is the same Victim, the same Sacrifice, Jesus Christ Who, by the ministry of His priest, offers Himself to God His Father.* (Sess. XXII. Chap. ii.)

These thoughts will arouse in your heart deep reverence, confidence and devotion while you are on the way to church.

When you have entered and reached the place you think the most suitable for recollection, resolve to avoid the faults which you are apt to fall into when you attend Mass, and ask God for grace to be faithful to your resolution. Then express the desire to obtain fully the ends for which the

Holy Sacrifice is offered, namely : to render unto God the glory due to Him because of His supreme dominion over all created beings ; to obtain of His infinite Goodness forgiveness and mercy ; to give thanks to Him for the innumerable benefits He has bestowed on us, and to ask for fresh mercies.

During Mass.

The benefits of Holy Mass can be secured in various ways. Ample latitude is allowed in this respect to the devotion of the faithful ; some prefer to use the prayers of the Mass contained in their prayer-book, others the Rosary, or Litanies followed by devout practices adapted for each day of the week, others again the Office for the dead, the Little Office of the Blessed Virgin, or that of the Sacred Heart. Select the one which seems to you the best, but never allow yourself to be so absorbed by vocal prayers that you lose sight of the three principal parts of the Mass ; the *Offertory*, the *Consecration*, and the *Communion*. For these precious moments reserve certain fixed practices of devotion which will help you to participate abundantly in the graces which are attached to them. We suggest some here :

I. — THE OFFERTORY. While the priest holds up the Host on the paten, and while he pronounces these words: *Suscipe, Sancte Pater, hanc immaculatam hostiam.* — *Accept, O Holy Father, this immaculate Host...* unite your offering to his ; place yourself in spirit on the altar of sacrifice, and say from your innermost heart : Deign to accept, O Holy Father, the offering which in all humility I make of all the senses of my body, of all the faculties of my soul. They are all gifts of Thy bounty. I offer them to Thee and declare before the Holy Angels who surround this altar that I only desire to use them in accordance with Thy most Holy Will manifested by Thy commandments. My most ardent desire is to consecrate myself wholly to Thee and to all which may contribute to the glory of Thy Holy Name, to the salvation of my neighbour and to my own sanctification. Assist me by Thy grace, I beseech Thee, O merciful Father so that I may persevere in these resolutions until my last breath. Follow this oblation and this prayer by reflection on your own conduct ; consider in what way your conduct has not sufficiently corresponded to the declaration you have just made, so that you may be more faithful to it in the future.

II. — THE CONSECRATION OF ELEVATION. In this solemn moment when the priest elevates before you the Victim

hidden under the veil of the consecrated Host, contemplate your loving Saviour with lively faith as those saw Him who had nailed Him to the Cross, covered with blood and wounds because of your sins, and forgetting Himself in those terrible sufferings in order to plead your cause with His Father, and to implore your forgiveness with that cry from His very Heart : *Father forgive them* (1)

This contemplation will arouse in your heart, deep reverence love and gratitude, abhorrence of sin, contrition, and boundless devotion.

After expressing these feelings, unite with Jesus in the universal prayer which He addresses to His heavenly Father : fix your eyes successively on the scars of His five Wounds, *which are*, in the words of St. Bonaventure, *like so many places of refuge, like suppliant voices which intercede for us*, and at each one of them ask some favour or special grace.

At the Wound in the right hand, — pray for the Sovereign Pontiff and for the Bishops priests and missionaries who under his guidance work for the salvation and sanctification of the world, so that their zeal may be crowned with complete success.

At the Wound in the left hand, — pray for the conversion of the heathen and of the Jews, heretics and schismatics and for the return to God of bad Christians who are in league with hell against Jesus Christ and His Holy Church.

At the Wound in the right foot, — pray for the members of your family in order of their relationships, and for your benefactors, your friends, and also according to the precept of Jesus, for your enemies.

At the Wound in the left foot, — pray for the souls in Purgatory, and especially for those who have the greatest claim on your charity.

At the Wound of the Heart of Jesus, — pray for yourself ; in that Heart burning with love lay all your cares, your sorrows, your fears, all your hopes and all your longings.

By acquiring the habit of attaching your prayers in this way to the Five Wounds of your Divine Saviour, you will say in a brief space of time and with no effort of mind, a universal prayer most pleasing to God, and most helpful to your neighbour and yourself.

III. — THE COMMUNION. On days that you do not have the happiness of drawing near to the altar, do not fail to make a spiritual communion which is sometimes as profitable,

(1) Luke, xxiii, 34.

says St. Teresa, as sacramental communion. It consists in making with great devotion from your innermost heart, three acts, namely : an act of Contrition as far as possible perfect ; an act of Love towards God, or of Charity, and an act of Desire, an ardent desire to truly receive Holy Communion with the abundant graces It produces in souls prepared for its reception.

After Mass.

Examine briefly :

Whether you have been faithful in following the preceding advice.

How you have employed the intervals which separate the principal parts of the Holy Sacrifice.

What care you have taken to behave suitably, and promptly put away distractions from you. If you have nothing to reproach yourself with, give thanks to God ; if not, ask pardon for your shortcomings.

Before leaving the church, ask Jesus to bless all that you undertake during the day, and also the good resolutions you have made in your morning prayers or during your meditation.

A PRAYER BEFORE MEDITATION.

My Lord and my God I believe that Thou art here present and that Thou seest me. I adore Thee and full of confidence in Thy Infinite Goodness, I humbly beg for grace to employ this time of meditation to Thy glory and to my spiritual benefit. Enlighten my understanding, touch my heart, strengthen my will so that I may know Thee better, may love Thee more and serve Thee more faithfully.

I beg this grace through the intercession of our Blessed Lady, my patron Saints, my guardian Angel, etc.

To prayer we should add our co-operation by making use of the means and devout practices recommended by the masters of the spiritual life :

MEANS. — To prepare if possible, the Points of the Meditation by reading them over carefully the night before ; by-thinking of them in bed when going to sleep, and recalling them on awaking in the morning. Before saying the preparatory prayer, ask yourself : Before Whom am I going to appear ? And why ? — Finish the meditation by an Our Father, followed by a short self-examination on the causes of the good or successful result of your meditation.

PIOUS PRACTICES. — When from weakness of body or mind, you are incapable of making a regular meditation, it will be sufficient to pass in review the probable occupations of the day : to see how you can do them well before God, and well before men : to resolve so to do them, and to ask the blessing of God on each one of them. You can also fervently deplore before God as you deplore before your director — your inability to meditate, your spiritual difficulties (naming them) your lack of virtues (naming them in detail *etc.*). To humble yourself, to surrender yourself in this way, rising from prayer prepared to suffer all the trials of the day, means that you have meditated well and profitably.

Occasional notes added to the meditations point out in a more detailed manner the way to meditate well.

MANUAL
OF
SOLID PIETY
OR
NEW PRACTICAL MEDITATIONS
ON THE LIFE OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST

JANUARY 1st.
ON THE THREE CIRCUMSTANCES
OF THE DAY.

THE CIRCUMCISION,
THE HOLY NAME OF JESUS, AND THE NEW YEAR.

I. *Prelude.* See the Infant Jesus offering to His heavenly Father the first shedding of His Blood for us.

II. *Prelude.* Ask for grace to begin the year with renewed fervour and generosity.

POINT I. — THE CIRCUMCISION OF THE INFANT JESUS.

CONSIDERATIONS. The first day of the year which coincides with the Octave of Christmas is a holiday of obligation. The Church instituted it in memory of the Circumcision to which Our Lord submitted on this day for love of us. It is on this day then, that He commenced (1) to exercise His office of Mediator by receiving the mark, the penalty and the debt of sin by offering Himself as a Victim of expiation, and shedding for us the first drops of His Blood. To this oblation of infinite value He united the consecration of His entire Self, of every moment

(1) Masters of the spiritual life advise us to think of the mystery which is the subject of our meditation as though it were actually taking place before our eyes.

of His mortal life which He had just entered upon. How great was this love of God towards men!

APPLICATIONS. Render unto Him love for love. To-day you begin a new year. Consecrate the first-fruits of it to this God of Love; consecrate it wholly to Him so that there may be no day, no moment of this year which is not employed in His service, which does not tend to His greater glory. Add to this consecration the offering of your soul, of your body, of all the blood which flows in your veins, and be ready to shed it to the last drop as a proof of your faith and love.

AFFECTIONS. They will consist in detailed acts of consecration and oblation.

RESOLUTIONS. From this first day of the year I desire to make earnest efforts, so that my conduct may be in accordance with this consecration and oblation.

POINT II. — THE BESTOWING OF THE HOLY NAME OF JESUS.

CONSIDERATIONS. The Angel had said to Joseph: *Mary shall bring forth a Son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus; for he shall save his people* (1). Among the Israelites it was customary to give male children a name at the time of circumcision, on the eighth day after their birth. This name was generally taken from some circumstance connected with the birth of the child, or from some quality with which it was hoped he would be endowed. Our heavenly Father alone knew the ineffable qualities which would char-

(1) Matt., i, 21.

acterise His Word made Flesh, and could give Him the name appropriate to His sublime mission : He gave Him the name of *Jesus*, that is, *Saviour*. The Divine Infant could not bear this fair and glorious name without fulfilling its meaning, consequently at the very moment that He received it, he showed Himself to be a Saviour by shedding His blood for us, one single drop of which is more than sufficient for the redemption of the whole world.

APPLICATIONS. In the old law, the newly-born became by circumcision the children of Abraham and the inheritors of the promises made to him. More fortunate than they, we become by Holy Baptism, of which circumcision was but a symbol, the adopted children of God, and the inheritors of His Kingdom ; we become Christians, disciples, brethren, joint-heirs with Jesus. How glorious and full of meaning are these titles ! But we must remember that if, contrary to the example of Jesus, we do not fulfil their sublime meaning, if we bear them in vain, and dishonour them by our conduct, they will be a motive for severer judgment and chastisement.

AFFECTIONS. Gratitude joined to a salutary fear.

RESOLUTIONS. I shall reflect frequently on this during the year so that everything in me may be worthy of the great names I bear.

POINT III. — THE NEW YEAR.

CONSIDERATIONS. The Blood that Jesus shed for us in the circumcision is the Blood of the New Covenant, *Sanguis meus novi testa-*

menti (1), a testament which was to renew the face of the earth by bringing fulfilment to promise, substituting the liberty of Divine adoption for servitude, and the law of charity for the law of fear which characterised the old testament.

• APPLICATIONS. Profit by the circumstances of the renewal of the year, and the marvellous regeneration effected in the world by the great mystery of this day, to renew your heart by an increase of fervour and generosity in God's service. May this year be one of zeal and progress. It will pass with the same rapidity as the one you have just ended. If God grant you the grace to see the end of it, how pleased and happy you will be to have spent it in a holy way.

COLLOQUY. With the Blessed Virgin, the witness of the wondrous mysteries which were accomplished by the circumcision of her Divine Son.

JANUARY 2nd.

ON THE NAME OF JESUS.

I. *Prelude.* Hear the angel saying to Joseph : *Thou shalt call His name Jesus. For He shall save His people* (2).

II. *Prelude.* Ask for grace to understand the greatness, merit, and power of the Name of Jesus.

POINT I. — THE GREATNESS OF THE NAME OF JESUS.

CONSIDERATIONS. The Name of Jesus is great in its origin, for it was God Himself who gave it through the ministry of an archangel. It is also great in its actual signification. The name of saviour of the country has sometimes been

(1) Matt., xxvi, 28. — (2) Matt., i, 21

given in gratitude to men by their fellow-men, but on no one have they ever dreamt of bestowing the title of Saviour of the World, the meaning of which in all its fulness has been so abundantly fulfilled by the Son of God made Man.

APPLICATIONS. With what reverence and devotion we should pronounce this great and holy Name *which is*, says the Apostle, *above all names* (1). Thus the observance was introduced and has become general since the early days of Christianity, of bowing or uncovering the head when pronouncing it, or on hearing it spoken. Do you not often fail in the reverence which is due to it by saying it perhaps carelessly or without devotion even in your prayers?

AFFECTIONS. Joy and gratitude at the thought of the inestimable favour of which you are reminded by the Apostle's words : *God is faithful, by whom you are called unto the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord* (2).

RESOLUTIONS. To increase our efforts this year to honour and make honoured as far as in us lies, the holy Name of Jesus.

POINT II. — THE MERIT OF THE NAME OF JESUS.

CONSIDERATIONS. The noble name a son bears solely by right of inheritance confers no great merit since it is only derived from the merits of others. Not so is it with the glorious Name borne by the Son of God.

He Himself acquired it through His own merits by redeeming mankind at the price of His life from the penalty of death which had

(1) *Philipp.*, ii, 9. — (2) *I Corin.*, i, 9.

been incurred, and by restoring to us our rights to our heavenly heritage. Was ever name or title more fully merited?

APPLICATIONS. The names of adopted child of God, of brother or sister of Jesus which you bear, are names doubtless of great value, but they are not due to your own merits; you owe them to the grace of Baptism. It is your duty nevertheless to strive to be worthy of them, it is your duty to co-operate with grace that you may nobly bear these names which you have such good reason to glory in. So far this grace has not failed you; but have you corresponded with grace? Has your co-operation been generous, constant? Can it be compared to the glorious titles of which you are reminded to-day?

AFFECTIONS. I shall arouse an ardent desire in my heart to see this aspiration of the Apostle fulfilled in me : *The name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in us according to the grace of God* (1).

RESOLUTIONS. During this year I shall endeavour to attain this end, particularly by a faithful practice of self-examination and by ejaculatory prayers.

POINT III. — THE POWER OF THE NAME OF JESUS.

CONSIDERATIONS. *In the name of Jesus; says St. Paul, every knee should bow, of those that are in heaven, on earth, and under the earth* (2). To ask with faith in the Name of Jesus, is to obtain. By the invocation of this name the Apostles performed the most wonderful miracles and even simple, faithful peo-

(1) II Thess., i, 12. — (2) Philipp., ii, 10.

ple cast out demons from the bodies of pagans. By invoking the Name of Jesus the martyrs of all ages have triumphed over their tortures, and confessors and virgins over the allurements of the world. The Church concludes all her prayers with the invocation of the Name of Jesus, and wishes us to find strength and consolation in our last agony in that Name.

APPLICATIONS. Should you not therefore have great confidence in invoking that holy Name in your temptations, sorrows, anxieties and all your undertakings? Does not Jesus expressly say : *Watsoever you shall ask the Father in my name, that will I do* (1)? Acquire the habit of saying some ejaculatory prayer in which the name of Jesus occurs, so that it may come naturally to your lips at critical moments, and above all, at the supreme moment when you are struggling with death. May your last words then be : « Jesus, Jesus, be to me a Jesus. »

COLLOQUY. With the Divine Infant Jesus your Saviour, in accordance with the holy inspirations you have experienced in your meditation (2).

(1) John, xiv, 13.

(2) The Affections and Resolutions recommended in the Points of the meditation will always supply ample matter for the colloquies, whenever necessary. Moreover they can be multiplied and used according to our devotion or inspiration at the time, with other persons besides those mentioned. In the final Colloquy we should offer God our practical resolutions for the day, and earnestly ask for grace to be faithful to them. It is a great mistake not to make practical resolutions for the day, and not to ask for grace to carry them out faithfully as though they could be done by our own strength. Finish the meditation by saying an, « Our Father » or « Hail Mary ».

JANUARY 3rd.

ON THE CIRCUMSTANCES

ATTENDING THE GIVING
OF THE HOLY NAME OF JESUS.

I. *Prelude.* The Archangel Gabriel says to Mary : *Thou shalt bring forth a Son and thou shalt call his name Jesus* (1).

II. *Prelude.* Ask for grace not to be unworthy of the name given to you at your baptism.

POINT I. — THE NAME OF JESUS, THE REWARD OF HUMILITY.

CONSIDERATIONS. *His name was called Jesus* (2). Saviour. When was this glorious Name given Him? Was it on the day of His birth when He was glorified by angels and venerated by Shepherds? No, but at the time of His circumcision when He chose to humble Himself so as to be like unto sinners by receiving the stigma of sin in His flesh. This name was given Him then as a reward for His ineffable humiliations. This is expressly declared by the Apostle in these words : *Christ Jesus* (3) *emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant* (4)... *For which cause God... hath given Him a name which is above all names* (5).

APPLICATIONS. If you wish to be worthy of the Name of Jesus which was imprinted on your forehead in the Sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation, be humble in mind and heart; be patient and resigned under humiliations wherever they may come from. You cannot expect

(1) Luke, i, 31. — (2) Luke, ii, 21. — (3) *Philipp.*, ii, 5.
— (4) *Ibid.*, 7. — (5) *Ibid.*, 9.

to be associated with the glory of Jesus unless you have had a share in His humiliations.

AFFECTIONS. Arouse an ardent desire in your heart to become as nothing in your own estimation, so that you may grow in the estimation of God, and to be willingly humiliated for love of Jesus in order to bear a greater resemblance to Him.

RESOLUTIONS. I shall receive and bear with patience, if not with joy, all the humiliations Divine Providence may be pleased to send me.

POINT II. — THE NAME OF JESUS,
THE REWARD OF OBEDIENCE.

CONSIDERATIONS. *His name was called Jesus* (1). When was He given this name? At the moment when, submitting willingly to the law of circumcision, He made the sacrifice of His own will and liberty to His Father, by undertaking to conform throughout His life to the strict claims of the Mosaic law. For he who submitted to circumcision, *is a debtor to do the whole law* (2), says St. Paul. That is what it cost the Incarnate Word to merit the name of Jesus. *Becoming obedient unto death* (3), says the same apostle *for which cause God also hath exalted Him and hath given Him a name which is above all names* (4).

APPLICATIONS. Rejoice at your happy resemblance to your Divine Saviour. Like Him, you are bound by your baptismal vows which you have often renewed, to keep not only the laws of God, but also the precepts of the Church. Like Jesus you have fettered your free will

(1) Luke, II, 21. — (2) Gal., V. — (3) Philipp., II, 8. — (4) *Ibid.*, 9.

with the yoke of many religious observances, and with the sacrifice of certain satisfactions which you might have indulged in without sin. Yet what are these commandments, observances and privations compared to the heavy burden imposed by the Mosaic law? Moreover, the unction of grace renders them easy and simple. Be generously and invariably faithful to them therefore, whatever it may cost you. It is on this consideration alone that the noble name you bear will be a title of glory and eternal reward for you.

AFFECTIONS. O Jesus, I have so often failed in this fidelity under such flimsy pretexts, in such easy matters. What can I do but humble myself and ask for a more generous heart from Thee?

RESOLUTIONS. Henceforth, from this very day, I shall be more faithful and generous, especially in all which concerns the deference and obedience I owe to those placed above me by Providence.

POINT III. — THE NAME OF JESUS, THE REWARD
OF MORTIFICATION.

CONSIDERATIONS. *His name was called Jesus* (1). When and at what moment? At His circumcision, at the very moment when He suffered for us and shed His Blood for us, binding Himself to lead a life of privation, mortification and sacrifice until He should end it by the immolation of His entire Self. That was when His heavenly Father gave Him the glorious name of Jesus, Saviour.

(1) Luke, ii, 21.

APPLICATIONS. *Christ also suffered for us*, says St. Peter, from the time of His entrance into the world, *leaving you an example that you should follow His steps* (1), by leading a life of self-sacrifice and mortification. And do not think that He only acted thus by way of counsel for the words of Jesus prove the contrary : *If any man will follow Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross* (2). And moreover : *He that taketh not up his cross and followeth Me, is not worthy of Me* (3). Consequently, the name you bear of a disciple of Jesus can never be a special title of glory and reward unless you resemble your Divine Master by resignation in your sufferings and by the practise of mortification. This is what is called by the Apostle circumcision of heart. Reflect here on your own conduct. Try to see if you are animated by the spirit of Jesus Christ, the spirit of mortification and self-sacrifice.

COLLOQUY. With Jesus who by His humiliations, obedience and sufferings shows the true road to glory and happiness to all who wish to follow Him. Or with St. Genevieve, the illustrious patroness of Paris, whose feast is celebrated to-day.

JANUARY 4th.

ON THE VALUE OF TIME.

I. *Prelude*. Hear St. Paul the Apostle saying : *Whilst we have time, let us work good to all men* (4).

II. *Prelude*. Ask for grace to appreciate the value of time, and to make a holy use of it throughout the year.

(1) I. *Peter*, ii, 21. — (2) *Mark*, viii, 34. — (3) *Matt.*, X, 38. — (4) *Gal.*, vi, 10.

POINT I.

CONSIDERATIONS. « Time is as precious as heaven », says St. Bernard. And nothing is truer, since not only will no one reach heaven without having passed through the trials of time, but moreover, according to the Divine promises, it can only be attained as a reward for having made a good use of time. This everlasting reward may depend on a single moment being well employed. Consider the penitent thief. His life had been evil; he was at the point of death, but at that supreme moment, enlightened by grace he humbly acknowledged his sins, implored our Divine Lord for mercy, and immediately heaven was assured to him. *This day thou shalt be with me in paradise* (1), Jesus said to him.

APPLICATIONS. How much consideration we should give therefore to the time granted us! We should value it as much and more than a diamond which is worth a kingdom. For what is an earthly kingdom in comparison with the Kingdom of Heaven? The good use of time may obtain the eternal possession of this kingdom for us; moreover, every moment which is well employed can win for us a greater degree of glory and happiness in heaven, a new heaven, as it were, in heaven itself.

AFFECTIONS. Acts of faith on this very encouraging truth, and of regret for not having made a better use of time.

RESOLUTIONS. I wish to order my time in a

(1) Luke, xxiii, 43.

better way so that it may be more profitably employed. Time is lost through want of method, but gained when carefully regulated.

POINT II.

CONSIDERATIONS. « Time is as precious as the Blood of Jesus Christ, adds St. Bernard, because the good actions performed by us in time can alone be meritorious before God in consequence and in virtue of the redemption, and as this redemption has only been achieved at the price of the Blood of Jesus Christ, therefore it is His Blood which has made time fruitful. The Blood of God-man has become like the coin which represents the value of time.

APPLICATIONS. « The Precious Blood of Christ », is a sacred phrase in all languages. What is there indeed more precious? St. Thomas says that one single drop of that Blood would suffice to redeem the world. We should then be misers of time in order not to lose one moment. God Himself sets us an example for He showers His gifts and favours on us in great profusion, but time He only bestows drop by drop. No one ever received two moments at a time. And we throw away this time which is so precious, we waste it on trifles ; we endeavour to make it pass rapidly, we use it in offending God and for our own misery.

AFFECTIONS. Pity the blindness of so many who abuse the most precious gift of God ; a blindness which you may unhappily have shared with them.

RESOLUTIONS. I shall imitate the Saints who believed they had never done enough in utilis-

ing time. St. Alphonsus Liguori and several others went so far as to bind themselves by a vow never to lose it voluntarily.

POINT III.

CONSIDERATIONS. « Time is worth what God Himself is worth », continues St. Bernard, « and the reason is that every moment well employed may procure for us the everlasting possession of God. » What a rigorous account we shall have to give of time ! An idle word is spoken in a moment, and Jesus assures us that this loss of time, which is insignificant in our eyes, will not pass unnoticed : *I say unto you, that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall render an account for it in the day of judgement* (1).

APPLICATIONS. You believe this, but does your conduct correspond with your belief ? Do you ask yourself seriously in your examinations of conscience, for an account of your employment of time, the loss of your time, and the reason for that loss of time ? Do you confess it with repentance, with a sincere resolve to amend ? Make a detailed examination ; see when, where and how you have lost time, so that it may be better employed throughout this new year. The principal means of spending it profitably and happily is to make a rule of life and to be as faithful as possible to it. Without this rule of life, we waste time on trifles and suffer from continual hesitations and perplexities. Have you not learnt this from experience ?

(1) Matt., xii, 36.

COLLOQUY. With St. Alphonsus Liguori who faithful to his vow of never wasting time, only ceased to write and work when he died.

JANUARY 5th.

ON THE GOOD USE OF TIME.

I. *Prelude.* The Apostle says these words : *Behold now is the acceptable time : behold now is the day of Salvation* (1).

II. *Prelude.* Ask as fruit of this meditation, for grace to practise faithfully the means of utilising and sanctifying time.

POINT I.

CONSIDERATIONS. To sanctify time and lose none of it, it is necessary to live constantly in a state of grace. Faith teaches us that no good action, however good and holy it may be of itself, will merit eternal life for him who performs it while in a state of mortal sin. It follows that all the time which is passed consciously in that state, is time lost for heaven. What a terrible loss and misfortune! And is that not the misfortune of most Christians? How many are there for whom this year, or the greater part of this year, will be lost for ever. How they will regret it one day!

APPLICATIONS. If your devotion to God's service held no other advantage than that of preserving you from that misfortune, should you not be thankful for having undertaken it? And you should be ready to make any sacrifices, if necessary, to persevere in it until your last breath.

(1) II. *Corin.*, vi. 2.

AFFECTIONS. Lord, increase in me esteem and love for Thy holy service!

RESOLUTIONS. I shall try to obtain for others the happiness I enjoy, by drawing them away as much as lies in my power, from their miserable state of sin.

POINT II.

CONSIDERATIONS. To sanctify time and to lose none of it, it is necessary to have a pure intention united to the state of grace. All our actions, good or indifferent in themselves, should be done with a supernatural motive, for God and in the sight of God. Men see the exterior alone; God judges the intentions. Whatever we do not do for Him will not be recompensed by Him. The Scribes and Pharisees performed many good works, but they were done ostentatiously, out of love for vain popularity. Jesus assures us in the Gospel that they will receive no reward, that they have lost their time and trouble (1).

APPLICATIONS. Should you not fear to be deprived, at least in part, of the merit of many good actions, for the reason that self-love, vanity or the desire to please men mingles secretly with the motives which make you act? Search here into the innermost recesses of your heart. Have the courage to question yourself and find an answer.

AFFECTIONS. Help me, O Lord, to gain the victory over my inordinate self-love which so often spoils my best actions in Thy eyes.

RESOLUTIONS. To renew a pure intention

(1) Matt., vi, 1-5.

often during the day, above all in actions which are indifferent in themselves, so that the very considerable time they occupy may be utilised and sanctified.

POINT III.

CONSIDERATIONS. To sanctify time and lose none of it, it is also necessary that our actions be done fervently, in a manner worthy of God. Perhaps you perform many good actions with an intention which is habitually good, but you do them carelessly, with indifference and many imperfections. The time they have occupied will in a great measure be lost and valueless. That is why the Holy Spirit urges us so strongly or rather commands : *Whatsoever thy hand is able to do, do it earnestly* (1).

APPLICATIONS. Happy the man who by means of vigilance and generosity, knows how to conform to that Divine precept. What a harvest of merits he will amass in a short time : *Being made perfect in a short space, he fulfilled a long time* (2) will be said of him as of the just man. It depends on ourselves to participate in this happiness. One way among many others, to attain it is to acquire the habit of adding these words to the sign of the Cross, which we make so often : I wish to perform this action well. Then afterwards examine yourself.

COLLOQUY. With young St. Stanislaus Kostka who even before he became a religious, attained great sanctity, in so short a time, not by doing anything remarkable, but by accompanying all his actions, even the smallest with great

(1) *Eccle.*, ix, 10. — (2) *Wisdom*, iv, 13.

purity of intention and ardent charity. In this way he sanctified time and did not lose the smallest portion of it. I shall ask him earnestly to obtain for me the grace to imitate him.

JANUARY 6th.

THE FEAST OF THE EPIPHANY OR OF THE KINGS. OCTAVE.

I. *Prelude.* Imagine the three Kings or Magi being guided by the light of the star.

II. *Prelude.* Ask for grace to understand the memories, blessings and duties recalled by this feast.

POINT I. — GREAT MEMORIES RECALLED BY THE EPIPHANY.

CONSIDERATIONS. The Church has, for all time, celebrated this Feast with extraordinary splendour for eight days in order to perpetuate the memory of a great and happy event. For it was the manifestation of Jesus Christ to the Magi and, in their person, to all the people of the earth who were buried as they were in the darkness of paganism. The meaning of the word Epiphany is manifestation or appearance. The historical details are given us in the Gospel which is read in the Mass of to-day. It begins with these words : *When Jesus therefore was born in Bethléhem of Juda, in the days of King Herod, behold there came wise men from the East to Jerusalem. Saying : Where is he that is born King of the Jews? For we have seen his star in the East, and are come to adore him* (1).

APPLICATIONS. The memory of the great event

(1) Matt., II, 1-2.

solemnised on this day recalls other memories and useful lessons. In the first place it reminds us of the eagerness of Jesus to make Himself known to all by means both gentle and efficacious. To the Jews who had faith, by an angel; to the Gentiles by a miraculous star; and He teaches us to be zealous in making God known and loved by all the world without distinction. Then it reminds us of the wonderful gentleness of the ways of Divine Providence, making the means of salvation always proportionate to the different dispositions of men, and it teaches us to have unwavering confidence in it.

AFFECTIONS. Admiration... Praise... Trust in Providence.

RESOLUTIONS. To think frequently to-day of the object of this Feast and of the great memories associated with it.

POINT II. — GREAT BLESSINGS RECALLED BY THE EPIPHANY.

CONSIDERATIONS. Abraham's descendants had been chosen to form a nation which would preserve the faith and worship of the true God amongst idolatrous people. But the day was to come when all on earth would be called to the same faith, to form but one people in Jesus Christ. This promise had been made to Abraham. It was fulfilled on this day by the calling of the Magi who represented all idolatrous peoples and consequently our own idolatrous ancestors. The Epiphany therefore reminds us of the inestimable blessing of our vocation to the true faith, of being born in a Christian country, and perhaps of having been brought up and educated by parents distinguished for their faith and piety.

APPLICATIONS. The memory of these magnificent blessings should always be present in our minds, but above all on this day. We should be all the more grateful considering that they were the effect of an entirely gratuitous predilection on the part of God. Let us fear ingratitude for it dries up the source of grace.

AFFECTIONS. In the Office of this day the Church urges us to be joyful and grateful. Let us be so during our meditation and throughout this glorious day.

RESOLUTIONS. To devote ourselves to joy and gratitude particularly in Holy Communion and during the solemn services we attend.

POINT III. .

THE GREAT AND HAPPY DUTIES RECALLED BY THE EPIPHANY.

CONSIDERATIONS. Faith worked wonders in the Magi. It made new men of them, spiritual men, saints, apostles and martyrs. An ancient tradition relates that they were baptised by St. Thomas the Apostle and that they themselves became apostles and martyrs of the faith. They are honoured as Saints by the Church in the East and West, and people still go in great numbers to visit the famous relics of their venerated heads which have been most carefully preserved since the 12th century in Cologne Cathedral.

APPLICATIONS. Jesus has enlightened us also with the most brilliant light of faith; it can be said to have been born with us and grown with us. From our childhood, the great mysteries it teaches and the holy duties it imposes have been made known to us. Let us then prove grateful,

and act in such a way that it may bring forth the fruits of sanctity ever more and more abundantly in us. It is a great and happy duty for us all. *Faith that worketh by charity* (1) says the Apostle... And Pope St. Gregory adds that wherever there is charity, it doeth great things. Can this be observed in you?

COLLOQUY. With the holy Kings, the first fruits of the Gentiles. Rejoice with them, and beg them to obtain for you a constant increase of faith and love.

JANUARY 7th.

THE FIDELITY OF THE MAGI

IN OBEYING THE INSPIRATIONS OF GRACE.

I. *Prelude.* Contemplate the Magi following the guidance of the Star which called them to the crib of the Saviour.

II. *Prelude.* Ask for fidelity to the inspirations of grace.

POINT I. — THE KINGS OBEYED THE GRACE WITH PROMPTITUDE.

CONSIDERATIONS. Fidelity to grace implies above all, promptitude in following its inspirations. That of the Magi was wonderful. A star of extraordinary brilliancy had attracted their attention, and an interior voice made them understand its signification. Immediately breaking all the ties which could detain them, they undertook to follow it. They could say truthfully to King Herod : *Vidimus... et venimus.* *For we have seen his star* — the star of the

(1) *Gal.*, v, 6.

new-born King — *in the East, and are come to adore Him* (1). It is probable that many other wise men, observers like them of the course of the planets, saw the star and felt inwardly inclined to follow it, but thought they must await further enlightenment. Their hesitation and delay deprived them for ever of the most exceptional favour, of the happiness of beholding with their own eyes the Saviour of the World.

APPLICATIONS. How many graces and merits you may also have lost by delaying to carry out the good intentions with which you have been inspired by God ! For usually delay means omission. You may often have had the good intention of utilising some spare moments in spiritual reading, in an act of mortification or of charity, in going to comfort a soul in trouble, or to help a sick neighbour who is ashamed to make known his distress, or in any other good work. But you delayed, and nothing was done. Does not an examination of the past tell you that this is the case ?

AFFECTIONS. Acknowledgement and repentance.

RESOLUTIONS. Henceforth I will follow the example of the Kings by carrying out with promptitude the good intentions with which God inspires me.

POINT II. — THE KINGS OBEYED GRACE WITH GENEROSITY.

CONSIDERATIONS. Fidelity to grace also implies generosity. This virtue consists in overcoming difficulties and apparent impossibilities which

(1) Matt., ii, 2.

naturally alarm our self-love and pusillanimity. This generosity was inevitably necessary in the Magi, for the journey which had to be undertaken was long, the season severe and the roads impracticable; moreover they did not know where the star would lead them and how long they would be away from their families and their affairs. They exposed themselves also to the criticisms and mockery of their countrymen. None of these things held them back. They abandoned themselves with entire confidence to Him who had called them by such unmistakeable signs.

APPLICATIONS. Why am I so often unfaithful to grace? Unfaithful to the resolutions made during my retreat with the best intentions? Unfaithful to certain practices of piety and mortification, the importance and utility of which I am well aware of? Is it not usually because generosity is wanting, because I give way to the fear of imaginary difficulties?

AFFECTIONS. Confess this humbly before God. — Lament the past. — See when and where you have been wanting in generosity and resolve to do better in the future (1).

RESOLUTIONS. In accordance with the light with which God inspires you at this moment.

(1) We must not fear to give too much time to these Affections and Resolutions, for by them we should kindle and inflame the fire of love, make our meditation fruitful and maintain our fervour throughout the day. Moreover, other affections and resolutions will present themselves to those who meditate much, and they will be all the better for coming from their innermost hearts or from Divine inspiration

POINT III.

THE KINGS OBEYED GRACE WITH PERSEVERANCE.

CONSIDERATIONS. Fidelity to grace implies in the third place, perseverance, because full and complete fulfilment of the good intentions with which grace inspired us is not always immediately obtainable. Constant efforts for days and months are often necessary on our part. The perseverance of the Magi was heroic. Nothing could daunt it, neither the inclement weather, nor the privations nor length of the journey, not the disappearance of the star, nor the inexplicable indifference with which the inhabitants of Jerusalem received the information regarding the great event announced by the star. God rewarded their constancy. The star reappeared and guided them to the feet of our Divine Saviour.

APPLICATIONS. How little is your perseverance maintained! How short-lived it usually is. What has become at midday of the resolutions made in the morning? Does it not often happen that before you finish certain actions you are unfaithful to the resolutions you made when you began them? Is it then surprising that you make so little progress? Strive to do better from to-day. Ask God through the mediation of the holy Kings, for the constancy and generosity which are wanting in you.

COLLOQUY. Beg the holy Kings to obtain for you a greater promptitude in corresponding to inspirations of grace, and above all for more generosity and constancy in fulfilling the good intentions it suggests.

JANUARY 8th.

THREE CIRCUMSTANCES

DURING THE JOURNEY OF THE MAGI.

I. *Prelude.* See the Magi disconsolate at the disappearance of the star.

II. *Prelude.* Ask for grace to understand the various incidents which befell the holy Kings and to profit spiritually by them.

POINT I. — THE DISAPPEARANCE OF THE STAR.

CONSIDERATIONS. When the Magi were near Jerusalem, the Star disappeared. Deprived of that heavenly light which had till then been their guide and consolation, what did they do? They were not in the least discouraged. They entered the city and with King Herod's assistance, they approached the teachers, the doctors of the law, in order to learn from them where the Messiah should be born. On receiving their answer that it was in Bethlehem, they immediately set out on the road which would lead them there.

APPLICATIONS. God acts in the same way with His faithful servants as with the Magi. He sometimes gives them much light and consolation; again He withdraws these from them, leaving them alone in an apparently profound darkness of night in order to prove and purify their faith and love. What should we do at those times? Imitate the holy Kings. We should not get discouraged, we should adore the designs of God, neglect none of our duties, nor our devotions, and while waiting for light to return, we should

have recourse to the advice of our directors with humility and docility. Have you done this?

AFFECTIONS. Declare that you are indifferent regarding the various states through which Our Lord may wish you to pass.

RESOLUTIONS. I desire to seek in all and above all, not the consolations of God, but the God of consolations, as St. Francis of Sales expresses it.

POINT II. — THE REAPPEARANCE OF THE STAR.

CONSIDERATIONS. God did not delay to reward the humble trust and docility of the Magi. Hardly had they left Jerusalem in the direction which had been pointed out to them when *behold the star... went before them*, says St. Matthew, *until it came and stood over where the child was. And seeing the star they rejoiced with exceeding great joy* (1).

APPLICATIONS. That is and ever will be the issue of the desolations and various trials through which God causes us to pass, provided we imitate the fidelity and constancy of the holy Kings. But alas! our infidelity and inconstancy are often so great. Instead of persevering in the good resolutions we have made, and having recourse to the direction of our spiritual guides, we give way to carelessness and distractions, and seek comfort from creatures. Must we not confess this?

AFFECTIONS. Humble acknowledgement. — Shame. — Repentance.

RESOLUTIONS. To prove more constant in trials.

(1) Matt., II, 9-10.

POINT III. — THE PLACE WHERE THE STAR STOOD.

CONSIDERATIONS. How great must have been the surprise of the Magi when they saw the place where the star stood. Over an abandoned stable. And what did they see there? A little Infant wrapped in swaddling-clothes, lying on some straw, in a crib (1) in the company of a Mother who had nothing to distinguish her from other mothers, and of an artisan and some poor shepherds, who, we may imagine, often renewed their visits and attentions to the Holy Family. What a trial to their faith! How could they recognise the predicted King of Israel in that Child? Rather was there something to offend a wounded pride and to disconcert a faith which in the least wavered. But the Magi were humble and *God... giveth grace to the humble* (2). Suddenly grace enlightened them, they understood the great mystery of the voluntary abasement of God their Saviour; they adored Him and their souls were inundated with ineffable joys and for them the stable was changed into paradise.

APPLICATIONS. Recall all that you have so often heard, read and meditated on the necessity and excellence of humility, on the extraordinary gifts and privileged graces with which

(1) This is according to the opinion of St. Augustine, St. Jerome and nearly all the holy Fathers who think that the Blessed Virgin remained at the birthplace of Jesus until the day of her Purification, and that the Adoration of the Magi took place on the 13th day after the Nativity. (St. Augustine's *Sermon on the Epiphany*, and St. Jerome's 17th epistle to Marcella.)

(2) *James*, iv, 6.

God is pleased to enrich souls that are truly humble, that seek but Him and live for Him alone.

COLLOQUY. Prostrate in spirit with the holy Kings at the feet of the Infant Jesus, earnestly beg for grace to grow unceasingly in humility and to make progress daily in perfection in times of desolation as well as in times of consolation.

JANUARY 9th.

THE ALARM, HYPOCRISY, AND THWARTED PLANS

OF KING HEROD

I. *Prelude.* Hear Jesus saying these words : *Woe to you... hypocrites* (1).

II. *Prelude.* Ask for sincerity and purity of intention

POINT I. — HEROD'S ALARM.

CONSIDERATIONS. When the Magi asked where the King of the Jews had been born whose star they had seen, *Herod*, says the Evangelist... *was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him* (2). What caused this uneasiness and sudden consternation of King Herod? — Was it some grave affair of State, the fear that some misfortune might befall the people confided to his care? Not at all. It came from egoism, ambition and jealousy; that is to say, from evil passions.

APPLICATIONS. Reflect here carefully on your own conduct. You too are sometimes troubled, sad and discouraged, what is the cause? Is it a plausible, reasonable cause? Because God is

(1) Matt., xxiii, 13. — (2) Matt., ii, 3.

offended? Because you yourself have offended Him? Because souls are being lost? Because the Church is persecuted? Or is it not on the contrary because you have been blamed, humiliated, mortified, opposed in your wishes, deprived of something to which you were attached, or even the fear that that might happen? It is sin that is at the root of all this, pride, vanity, self-love, jealousy or inordinate attachment to yourself and your own comfort. Should you not acknowledge this? Examine yourself.

AFFECTIONS. Ask God to teach you to die a little more to self, and to enable you to understand these words of the *Imitation* thoroughly: *True peace of heart therefore is found by resisting our passions, not by obeying them* (1).

RESOLUTIONS. To try to obtain this peace by restraining inordinate impulses as soon as we feel them awakened in us.

POINT II. — HEROD'S HYPOCRISY.

CONSIDERATIONS. This is the account of it given in the Gospel: *Then Herod privately calling the wise men learned diligently of them the time of the star which appeared to them; And sending them into Bethlehem, said: Go and diligently inquire after the child, and when you have found him; bring me word again, that I also may come and adore him* (2). What was Herod's real intention in this conduct which was so respectful and pious in appearance? Subsequent events disclosed it. It was to ascertain the age and abode of the Divine Infant so

(1) *Imitation*, Book I, Chap. vi. — (2) Matt., ii, 7-8.

that he might be put to death, and in case of there being any doubt concerning His identity, to include Him in the general massacre of all infants of that same age, born in the vicinity of Bethlehem. Was there ever a more detestable scheme, hidden under blacker hypocrisy?

APPLICATIONS. All hypocrisy even if not used as a cloak for crime is hateful to God and to men. Yet to a certain extent it is more common than we imagine, for to appear virtuous without troubling to be so in reality, is hypocrisy; only to conform to orders received and to the duties of our state when we are under observation; to praise those with whom we happen to be and criticise them in their absence; to speak differently to what we think in order to obtain our desires; to depreciate ourselves in order to evoke praise, and similar things, are obviously a form of hypocrisy.

AFFECTIONS. Detest all duplicity, dissimulation and hypocrisy before God. Ask him for grace never to be guilty of what you criticise and condemn.

RESOLUTIONS. To strive to merit the praise bestowed on Nathanael by Jesus. *Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no guile* (1).

POINT III. — HEROD'S THWARTED PLANS.

CONSIDERATIONS. *The hope of the hypocrite shall perish* (2) we are told by holy Job, and Herod provides us with the proof of his statement, for the angel of the Lord commanded the Magi to return by another way, and later

(1) John, i, 47. — (2) Job, viii, 13.

told St. Joseph to fly into Egypt with the Divine Infant. In this way King Herod's wicked plans were thwarted, and the massacre of the children of Bethlehem served but to fill heaven with more Saints and to call down on the tyrant the execration of his fellow men and all posterity.

APPLICATIONS. The irreligious and wicked, who incessantly persecute Jesus Christ in His Church and her members can do nothing against us without God's permission. Let us trust in Him. He knows how to turn their conspiracies to their own confusion and our advantage. The annals of ecclesiastical history afford superabundant proof of this consoling truth, which is proclaimed moreover from the heights of heaven by millions of martyrs, to whom persecution brought an immense increase of glory and imperishable happiness.

COLLOQUY. With the Infant Jesus, in accordance with the holy inspirations you have felt in this meditation.

JANUARY 10th.

THE OFFERING OF THE MAGI.

I. *Prelude.* Imagine the Magi prostrate at the feet of Jesus offering their gifts.

II. *Prelude.* Ask for grace to imitate them in their noble faith, generosity and love.

POINT I. — WHAT DO THEY OFFER?

CONSIDERATIONS. A custom which is generally accepted among Orientals even in our day is that no one presents himself before a king or mighty prince without offering gifts. The Magi

faithfully observed this custom. The Gospel relates that after bending low to adore the Infant Jesus, *opening their treasures, they offered him gifts; gold, frankincense, and myrrh* (1). These presents were the most precious products of the soil of their countries, and, by a secret disposition of Providence, they also represented the three eminent characteristics of the Messias, namely, His eternal and universal Royalty by the gold; His Divinity by the frankincense, and His Humanity by the myrrh.

APPLICATIONS. *Neither shalt thou appear before me empty* (2). This was the precept given by the Lord to the people of Israel whom he had enriched with the spoils of Egypt. He gives it to us also whom He has enriched with the spoils or rather with the infinite merits of His Blood and Death. That is why St. Chrysologus says that to adore God without offering Him something shows want of devotion. Therefore each time we kneel before the holy Tabernacle, let us add the offering of some mortification, or some generous resolution to our acts of adoration.

AFFECTIONS. Make an offering to Jesus of yourself and of your desire to please him more and more.

RESOLUTIONS. To add mortification to prayer by kneeling, for instance without leaning on your elbows or by sitting without leaning back during at least part of your prayers, and at Mass or Benediction.

(1) Matt., II, 11. — (2) *Exodus*, XXXIV, 20.

POINT II. — HOW DID THEY OFFER THEM?

CONSIDERATIONS. The dispositions accompanying the Magi's gifts were their chief merit. What were they? Joy and generosity, for they gladly offered what was most precious to them; humility for they regretted not having gifts a thousand times more precious; love and most tender filial piety for they bound themselves for ever to the service of Him whom they recognised as their King and their God.

APPLICATIONS. Imitate the holy Kings and offer Jesus whatever is most precious to you, whatever is rightly speaking your very own, such as your will. Declare that you are disposed to accept gladly for love of your adorable Saviour, the Cross He may be pleased to lay on you, and assure Him that you are willing to bear it until death, if such be His holy will. That offering will be pleasing to Him, and you will obtain many favours in return.

AFFECTIONS. These will consist in making your offering to the Infant Jesus, in laying it, in the simplicity of your heart, at the foot of the Crib as at the throne of His mercy, and in praying that he may accept it although so unworthy of His Divine Majesty, granting you in return a heart capable of loving Him as He deserves.

RESOLUTIONS. I shall often renew this offering in my visits to the Blessed Sacrament.

POINT III. — HOW DID JESUS RECEIVE WHAT THEY OFFERED?

CONSIDERATIONS. If it be true, and we cannot doubt it, that God does not esteem our gifts at

their actual worth but according to the dispositions accompanying them, how great must the pleasure of the Infant God have been in receiving the gifts of these pious adorers? And if it be no less true that He never allows Himself to be outdone in generosity, we can have no doubt that He gave them in return gifts infinitely more precious than those they had offered to Him (1).

APPLICATIONS. These thoughts are full of consolation and encouragement. They remind us of the assurance given by Jesus Himself that our most : insignificant offerings and the least of our good actions will be rewarded for *whosoever shall give a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, amen I say to you, he shall not lose his reward* (2).

COLLOQUY. With the Infant Jesus.

JANUARY 11th.

THE HAPPINESS OF THE MAGI.

I. *Prelude.* See the Magi overwhelmed with joy and happiness at the feet of Jesus.

II. *Prelude.* Ask for grace to experience some of that joy.

(1) That this book of Meditations may not be merely used for spiritual reading, pause and reflect after each chief sentence of the Considerations and Applications, as if each one of them formed a special paragraph. — Your own reflections will enlighten and touch you more than any that can be suggested.

(2) Matt., x, 42.

POINT I. — THE MAGI ADMITTED TO THE KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS.

CONSIDERATIONS. One of the first thoughts which presents itself to our minds when we hear the Gospel narrative of the calling of the Magi, is that of the happiness which fell to their share. What happiness to have been miraculously called from the darkness of paganism to the Divine Light of the Incarnate Word, to have been initiated into the sublime teachings of the Gospel even before it had been preached to the nations! To what did the Magi owe this wonderful happiness bestowed on them in preference to so many millions of others who lived and died in infidelity and sin? Solely to the mercy and predilection of God their Saviour.

APPLICATIONS. You too have been the object of this same predilection on the part of God, since you were born of Christian parents who initiated you from your earliest years into the knowledge and love of Jesus. You might have been born, as the greater number of people are, of pagan, Jewish, or Mahomedan parents, and how great your unhappiness would then have been in time and eternity? To what do you owe your preservation from that, and your wealth in every kind of means of salvation and sanctification? Is it not also solely to the mercy of God?

AFFECTIONS. Joy and thanksgiving.

RESOLUTIONS. To think often of these words of the Holy Spirit : *Unto whomsoever much is given, of him much shall be required* (1).

(1) Luke, XII, 48.

POINT II. — THE MAGI ADMITTED TO THE COMPANY OF JESUS.

CONSIDERATIONS. We can imagine that the three Kings remained more than one day at the happy termination of their long and difficult journey, and that in consequence they had the signal happiness of forming part of the company of Jesus which had till then been restricted to Mary, Joseph, and some shepherds. What blessed moments they spent in that company and how many graces they must have received! How they must have rejoiced at having obeyed the invitation of the star!

APPLICATIONS. You share this happiness with them, if by a decree of the Divine mercy you have been born in a Catholic family where good traditions have been preserved, where piety is held in honour, where the laws of the Church are religiously observed, where peace and unity dwell and on which God has been pleased to show His Providence by bestowing His graces and blessings in abundance. What happy days, days rich in merit have been granted you, with the hope that the grace of perseverance might lead you into the company of Jesus glorified in heaven.

AFFECTIONS. Rejoice with the Magi and rejoice yourself that you have been faithful to the star of your vocation which called you from the distractions, perhaps from the sins of the world, to the practice of solid piety.

RESOLUTIONS. Not to allow any day to pass without thanking God for the blessing of this vocation, without asking for grace to persevere till death in the good dispositions He deigned to communicate to your heart.

POINT III. — THE MAGI ADMITTED TO THE KISS OF JESUS.

CONSIDERATIONS. We may imagine again that the Magi were able not only to contemplate at their leisure the ravishing features of the Divine Infant but also that to crown their happiness they received Him in their arms from the tender hands of Mary, that they were permitted to kiss Him and press Him to their hearts. What glorious moments for them, and what an abundance of light, love and holiness they must have received?

APPLICATIONS. You envy their happiness but do you not share it with them each time you receive Holy Communion? You are then permitted not only to enfold Jesus in your arms, to your heart, but to admit Him into your heart, incorporating Him, identifying yourself in a certain sense with Him. How is it then that after so many Holy Communions you have made as yet so little progress in the love and intimacy of Jesus? Is not the reason to be found in the negligence and lukewarmness accompanying your Communions? For the very reason that they are frequent, have they not become rather a matter of routine? Unfortunately, it is in the nature of man to become so accustomed at length to even the most holy things that he does not treat them with the respect due to them. That you may not fall into this evil nor lose the fruit of your Communions, precede them from time to time with the first of the six meditations for days of Communion, and read over carefully the practices for communicating with devotion, which are placed at the end of

this volume, or one of the chapters from the *Imitation* which are recommended, as well suited to produce and maintain great devotion in our hearts both before and after Holy Communion.

COLLOQUY. Beg the holy Kings to present you to the Infant Jesus, and to obtain for you a large share of the favours they received.

JANUARY 12th.

ON THE GRACE OF THE MAGI'S VOCATION.

I. *Prelude.* Hear Jesus saying these words ; *I have chosen you* (1).

II. *Prelude.* Ask for grace to grow incessantly in appreciation and love of your holy vocation to Christianity and to practices of piety.

POINT I. — THE CALLING OF THE MAGI WAS A PURELY GRATUITOUS GRACE.

CONSIDERATIONS. God was assuredly not bound to repeal the ordinary laws of His Providence in favour of the Magi by calling and guiding them by a miraculous star, yet on the other hand, there can be hardly any doubt that among so many millions of pagans there must have been many who had as much and more right than they to be miraculously called to the knowledge of the Messiah. To what did they owe their vocation? Solely to a gratuitous love of predilection.

APPLICATIONS. And to what do I myself owe

(1) John, xv, 16.

my vocation to Christianity, being born a child of God by baptism in preference to so many others who are born in the darkness of idolatry? Was it because God foresaw that I should correspond better than others with this first grace? That I should preserve it wholly throughout my life, and enhance it with all the beauties of virtue? No, my conscience protests. To what then do I owe it? Solely to the free election of God, to an entirely gratuitous predilection : *You have not chosen me : but I have chosen you* (1). These are Jesus' own words.

AFFECTIONS. Full of joy and gratitude, say with the Apostle : *By the grace of God, I am what I am* (2).

RESOLUTIONS. I will try to be able to say in truth with the same Apostle : *And His grace in me hath not been void* (3).

POINT II. — THE CALLING OF THE MAGI
WAS A GRACE OF CONVERSION.

CONSIDERATIONS. Since the Magi were born, brought up, and lived, amidst the darkness and confusion of paganism, we may presume that they followed with the majority the wide path which leads to destruction. The grace of vocation came to draw them away from it for ever, to set them on the straight path of justice, making them new men in Jesus Christ, Our Saviour.

APPLICATIONS. Where were you before the star of vocation or grace came to enlighten you? You were under the influence of a corrupt and corrupting world where all that is seen

(1) John, xv, 16. — (2) I *Corin.*, xv, 10. — (3) *Ibid.*

and heard encourages sin. How far did you allow yourself to be carried away by the flood of temptation and sin? Recall your past life. See in what sins and bad habits you may have lived. How could such a life have ended except in your eternal ruin? The grace of your vocation drew you away from it and set you on the narrow path of virtue and salvation. What a blessed vocation! It was a grace of conversion for you as well.

AFFECTIONS. Declarations of gratitude and unwavering confidence in the goodness of God *who hath called you*, as St. Peter says *out of darkness into his marvellous light* (1).

RESOLUTIONS. To redouble our efforts to atone for the past and to respond to God's favours by great generosity in His holy service (2).

(1) *Peter*, ii, 9.

(2) Do not be content with making resolutions, but rouse yourself besides to be faithful to them by considering some motives which make the most impression on your heart, such as: 1° the great advantages which must result from your fidelity: a greater purity of conscience, fewer debts to pay in purgatory, more merits, glory and happiness in heaven and greater blessings on the good works in which you take part; — 2° justice, expediency: what does the aim of your creation demand from you — the vows taken in Holy Baptism — the shortness and value of time? — 3° facility: all is reduced to some slight efforts and some sacrifices lightened by the unction of grace; — 4° joy: what sweet satisfaction after an effort, a sacrifice made in God's sight, and what consolation above all at the hour of death. — 5° finally necessity, for Jesus says: *But one thing is necessary* (Luke, xv, 42). And that is that you may be saved and sanctified, and the resolutions you make should help you greatly. In the consideration of these motives, as well as in the affections and colloquies indicated, there will be enough to occupy all the time of meditation even if it should last more than an hour.

POINT III. — THE CALLING OF THE MAGI
WAS A SANCTIFYING GRACE.

CONSIDERATIONS. Their vocation enabled them to see clearly the nothingness of all that is not God, and filled their hearts with the holy ardour of charity. From that moment they made rapid progress in the practice of the most sublime virtues. All three are honoured with the title of Saints and have been invoked by the whole Church for twenty centuries.

APPLICATIONS. It is also to the light and unction of grace and a special vocation that you owe your knowledge of the vanity of the world, your breaking of the bonds which kept you as it were enslaved, your resolve to dedicate yourself to the service of God, to make an open profession of it and to aim at the perfection of your state. To obviate human inconstancy, renew your vows or pledges of Holy Baptism frequently. Those vows contain both the duty to aim at holiness and the means to attain it. Be faithful to them and you will share the glory and happiness of the holy Kings one day in heaven.

COLLOQUY. With the Magi glorified in heaven. — Rejoice with them and for them. Beg them earnestly to obtain for you grace to make constant progress in the beautiful paths of Christian justice, to excel in the virtues proper to the state or condition in which Divine Providence has placed you, and in which many Saints placed on our altars have attained the highest perfection.

JANUARY 13th.

Octave of the Epiphany.

THE DEPARTURE OF THE MAGI

AND RETURN TO THEIR OWN COUNTRY.

I. *Prelude.* See the Magi prostrated at the feet of Jesus before their departure.

II. *Prelude.* Ask for grace never to leave the Presence of Jesus in the Eucharist without the feelings which then filled the hearts of the Magi.

POINT I. — THE DEPARTURE OF THE MAGI.

CONSIDERATIONS. It will always be difficult or rather impossible for us to form the least idea of the happiness and spiritual joy experienced by the Magi in the company of the Infant Jesus. How gladly would they have spent all their lives there! But at last they were obliged to leave Him. How did they do it? With the greatest regret, thanking Him with full hearts for having been called so wonderfully and received so lovingly, asking for His blessing and declaring their unbounded devotion and their desire to make Him known and loved by all men.

APPLICATIONS. That is the way in which we should leave the Presence of Jesus Christ each time we visit Him in the Sacrament of His love or when we have received Him in Holy Com-

munion. Have you done this? Have you not often left without having done any of these things? With coldness and indifference, perhaps because you approached with too little faith and too little earnestness?

AFFECTIONS. Shame and sorrow.

RESOLUTIONS. To amend what has been wanting in the past.

POINT II. — THE RETURN OF THE MAGI.

CONSIDERATIONS. The Magi *having received an answer in sleep that they should not return to Herod, they went back another way into their country* (1). Full of other feelings, we might add, far more perfect than those which formerly filled their hearts. No longer of simply pious curiosity, but of the most complete self-abnegation, of scorn for all the possessions of the world, of a perfect love of Jesus and of an ardent desire to labour and suffer much for Him. Those were the wonderful effects of the intimate intercourse they had had with the Author of all good and all holiness.

APPLICATIONS. Spare yourself neither trouble nor effort that such may be the result and fruit of your intercourse with God in your meditations, during Mass, in your visits to the Blessed Sacrament and especially in your Holy Communions. Why should it not be so? Do not these holy practices bring you intimately into contact also with that same God who worked such a marvellous transformation in the hearts

(1) Matt., ii, 12.

and minds of the Magi? Therefore if you do not obtain the same results from those frequent communications with God, there must be some obstacle preventing it. What is that obstacle in yourself?

AFFECTIONS. Grant me grace, O Lord, to recognise and remove this obstacle.

RESOLUTIONS. To take the most efficacious means of succeeding in this matter.

POINT III. — THE PERSEVERANCE OF THE MAGI.

CONSIDERATIONS. The honours paid to the Magi by the Church and the veneration with which she preserves their renowned relics are a sure proof of their perseverance in fervour and in the piety they had learnt at the foot of the Crib in Bethlehem, and that they not only persevered for a few months but throughout the thirty-three years which elapsed until the promulgation of the Gospel. At that epoch they were initiated into Christianity by Baptism and bore witness to its truth shortly after by shedding their blood.

APPLICATIONS. Enter into yourself and recall your fervour during the happy years which preceded or followed your first Communion. That fervour should have continually increased, for it has been unceasingly stimulated since then by your spiritual directors, but what has in reality taken place? Have you not fallen away from your first ardour, from your efforts to perform your spiritual duties well and to conform all your actions with the holy laws of the Gospel, eagerly taking advantage of oppor-

tunities for practising humility, mortification and charity? If this examination shames you, do not get discouraged, for it will be good for you, it will set you on the right path, the path of progress.

COLLOQUY. With your Guardian Angel. — Beg him to bring you back to your first fervour by holy inspirations and to rouse you by salutary remorse should you happen to fall.

JANUARY 14th.

THREE THOUGHTS

TO ROUSE OUR FERVOURS EACH DAY ON WAKING.

I. *Prelude.* Hear these words from the lips of Jesus : *If thou didst know the gift of God (1), and that in this thy day, the things that are to thy peace (2).*

II. *Prelude.* Ask for grace to grow in fervour during the course of this year

POINT I.

CONSIDERATIONS. May the fruit of the octave of the Epiphany be an increase of fervour in you. Strive to rouse it each day on waking by one of these three thoughts which form the subject of this meditation.

First thought : This day has only been given me that I may glorify God and amass merits for heaven. Yesterday is no longer mine ; to-morrow is uncertain ; this day is in my hands. How

(1) John, iv, 10. — (2) Luke, xix, 42.

glad I shall be when evening comes if I have spent it in a holy way, without wasting any of it? God will demand a strict account of this day for there is not a single day which should not be used for His glory and which I cannot utilise to gain my happiness in eternity.

APPLICATIONS. Is this thought often in my mind from the time I wake? Does it occupy my mind while I dress? It is well suited to arouse generous feelings in us, and to maintain our holy inspirations of fervour. This was the effect it produced in the Saints and which it produces still every day in so many Christians who are in earnest about their spiritual progress.

AFFECTIONS. My God, I must confess that I often spend the first moments of the day without any of those thoughts or even anything profitable.

RESOLUTIONS. I will be on my guard against this spiritual heaviness, this defective way of beginning the day.

POINT II.

CONSIDERATIONS. Second thought: God has attached many graces to this day, perhaps special graces which should contribute powerfully towards my advancement and final perseverance. I shall expose myself to many dangers therefore if I neglect to correspond with those graces, and my regret will be indescribable later on. In any case, how great will be my loss in consequence both in time and in eternity.

APPLICATIONS. This second thought will make

you attentive and docile to inspirations of grace during the day. Acknowledge nevertheless that either from distractions or cowardice, you often receive the gift of God in vain. Should this not make you fear to incur the reproach and punishment reserved for ingratitude?

AFFECTIONS. Salutary fear of abusing Divine grace. — Regret for having lost so many opportunities of growing in merit and holiness.

RESOLUTIONS. To think frequently of those words which Jesus, weeping, addressed to the intractable and ungrateful inhabitants of Jerusalem : *If thou also hadst known, and that in this thy day, the things that are to thy peace* (1).

POINT III.

CONSIDERATIONS. Third thought : This day may be my last. It will be the last in reality for a hundred thousand such as myself. That according to statistics, is the approximate number of deaths which take place every twenty-four hours. Who can assure me that I shall not be of that number? If an angel came to assure me of it, how much I would do to-day! How scrupulously I would avoid all sin, how ardently I would strive to perform all my actions well, even the most insignificant, and to neglect nothing which would make me more pleasing to God. Nothing more would be necessary to sanctify me.

APPLICATIONS. We have an infallible means of obtaining this happy result by following the

(1) Luke, XIX, 42.

counsel which St. Anthony gave to his disciples : My dear children, he said, try to live each day as though it were the last day of your life. It is through following this counsel that many Saints have fulfilled a long career in a short space of time, St. John Berchmans amongst others. This holy youth while yet a novice in the Society of Jesus, had no sooner heard these words of St. Anthony commented on, than he resolved to make them the rule of his life. We find proof of this in these words in his handwriting which are preserved to this day : I shall live from day to day, devoted wholly to my sanctification, with no thought for the morrow, as if there might be none for me. Let us do likewise ; let us follow the same rule of conduct, and recall the thought of it each morning, so that we too shall make rapid progress like that young and loveable Saint. *Full days shall be found in them* (1) as Holy Scripture expresses it, days full of good works and merit.

COLLOQUY. With your Guardian Angel. — Beg him to remind you each morning, of these three thoughts and to assist your efforts so that you may acquire this good habit. Have recourse moreover, to the powerful intercession of the great St. Hilary, Bishop of Poitiers and Doctor of the Church, whose feast is kept to-day.

(1) *Ps.*, LXXII, 10.

JANUARY 15th.

The mysteries accomplished in the temple at Jerusalem on the fortieth day after the birth of the Infant Jesus.

THE PURIFICATION OF THE MOTHER OF JESUS.

THE SUBLIME VIRTUES OF WHICH SHE GIVES
US AN EXAMPLE.

I. *Prelude.* The Blessed Virgin presents herself humbly at the entrance to the temple.

II. *Prelude.* Ask for grace to imitate her in the virtues of which she gives us an example.

POINT I. — THE OBEDIENCE OF MARY.

CONSIDERATIONS. On the fortieth day after the birth of Jesus, Mary went to the temple of Jerusalem as the law of Moses prescribed, to be purified, not from sin, but from the legal stain which she was supposed to have contracted like all the other mothers. In reality, this was not the case, for having become a mother by the operation of the Holy Ghost, Mary remained a Virgin; therefore she could not have contracted any legal stain and the law of the Purification did not concern her. Yet she submitted to it in order to show her love for the law and to avoid giving scandal among the Jews who were ignorant of the great mystery performed in her favour.

APPLICATIONS. Do you not observe a vast contrast between your obedience and that of Our Blessed Lady? She obeyed in difficult matters in spite of the most legitimate rights to

exemption, and you avoid agreeable and easy observances with slight pretexts. How many times has this occurred, and on more than one occasion, with great detriment to the edification you should have given either to the members of your own family or to those with whom you live?

AFFECTIONS. Shame and regret.

RESOLUTIONS. Like the Blessed Virgin Mary I will acquire the habit of seeing the holy will of God in all the duties required by my state and my social or family ties.

POINT II. — THE HUMILITY OF MARY.

CONSIDERATIONS. By submitting to the law of the Purification Mary consented to veil the splendour of her most glorious privilege. In the sight of men, when she mixed with the other women in the first court of the temple, she lost the glory of her virginity of which she was so jealous. She was taken for an ordinary woman who needed to be purified like the others before being admitted to the second court. But Mary was humble, and delighted in humiliations. She knew that God recognised her virginal purity; that was enough for her. She troubled little over the judgments of men.

APPLICATIONS. Do you reason and act in this way? Perhaps you care little about remaining pure in God's sight, and give all your attention to appearing irreproachable before men, and provided you incur neither reproof from those on whom you are dependent, nor censure from your equals, you like to imagine that all is well and that you stand right with God. It is a grievous delusion.

AFFECTATIONS. You can obtain them from these words of the *Apocalypse* : *Thou sayest : I am rich, and made wealthy, and have need of nothing : and knowest not, that thou art wretched, and miserable and poor, and blind and naked* (1).

RESOLUTIONS. I will often ask myself : What does God think of me ? Had I now to appear before the tribunal of His infinite justice what would my fate be ? — What motives for regret or joy would my past life call to my mind ?

POINT III. — MARY'S SPIRIT OF POVERTY.

CONSIDERATIONS. The law of the Purification prescribed that the mother should offer as a holocaust by the hands of the priest a lamb a year old and a turtle-dove, or at least two turtle doves or two young pigeons. The first was the offering of the rich, the other that of the poor. We might imagine that Mary could easily have bought the wherewithal to make the offering of the rich with the gold received from the Magi, but through her love of humility she was content with offering the gift of the poor. Where could this appreciation and love of voluntary poverty have come from, since no daughter of Juda had set her an example of it ? Undoubtedly it was from the example of her Divine Son who chose to be born in a stable amidst the utmost possible privation.

APPLICATIONS. Like Mary, keep ever before your eyes Jesus the King of Heaven and earth who became poor for us, so poor that He had

(1) *Apoc.*, III, 17.

not *where to lay his head* (1) as He Himself said, and like her you will appreciate and love poverty because your Saviour chose it as the inseparable companion of his mortal life. You will never obey the claims of an unchristian luxury, and you will bear with perfect resignation privations and changes of fortunes if it pleases Our Lord that you should experience them. You will at least sympathise with the necessities and sufferings of the poor and you will prove generous towards them, making sacrifices to enable you to multiply your alms.

JANUARY 16th.

PRESENTATION OF THE INFANT JESUS IN THE TEMPLE.

I. *Prelude.* See the Blessed Virgin offering the Infant Jesus to the Eternal Father.

II. *Prelude.* Ask God for grace to make offerings which will be worthy of Him.

POINT I. — MARY CARRIES THE INFANT JESUS TO THE TEMPLE.

CONSIDERATIONS. *According to the law of Moses they carried him to Jerusalem, to present him to the Lord* (2). According to this law, added to that of the Purification, parents were bound to take their first-born son to the temple to offer him to God out of gratitude, to redeem him with a hundred sicles or a hundred farthings because the destroying angel had spared the first born of the Hebrews on the night that

(1) Matt., viii, 20. — (2) Luke, ii, 22.

he slew every first born in the land of Egypt (1).

APPLICATIONS. The obvious conclusion to be drawn from this law is that God wishes, or rather demands that we should always remember with gratitude the evils from which He has preserved us and the favours He has granted us. Go over in your mind at this moment, the evils of soul and body from which God has saved you; then the innumerable favours in the order of nature and grace with which He has overwhelmed you and ask yourself: Has my gratitude been proportionate to so many benefits? Do I at least remember them with gratitude?

AFFECTIONS. *What shall I render to the Lord, for all the things that he hath rendered to me (2)?*

RESOLUTIONS. I will reawaken my feelings of gratitude, especially each time that I hear these words read or sung in the Preface of the Mass. *Gratias agamus Domine Deo nostro.*

POINT II. — MARY OFFERS THE INFANT JESUS TO THE LORD.

CONSIDERATIONS. The offering which Mary made of her Child was infinitely more perfect than that of other mothers in every respect. For them, the presentation and redemption of their first-born was merely an act of deference to the law, simply a legal ceremony, followed by a family feast and merry-making which occupied the greater part of the day. Mary, on the contrary, offered and sacrificed her beloved Child to the Lord in reality, as a Victim who would one day be immolated for the redemp-

(1) *Exodus*, xiii. 15. — (2) *Psa.*, cxv. 12.

tion of the world, so with her heart full of the most sublime thoughts she spent the day in recollection, prayer, and good works without however neglecting to fulfil all that custom required of her.

APPLICATIONS. Try, like Mary, to render your offerings pleasing to God by making them in a spirit of faith and love. Try too to spend the Lord's day and the principal feasts of the year in a holy way and to celebrate them in a worthy manner. These holy days are unfortunately hardly more than days of relaxation, merry-making and good cheer now for a great many Christians who merely refrain from desecrating them, and the beautiful ceremonies of worship are to them nothing more than pious shows. How few there are who sanctify these holy days as they should be sanctified. Does not your conscience reprove you in any way in the matter? Examine yourself and if you find that you are guilty, humble yourself profoundly before God.

RESOLUTIONS. To do better henceforth, and to watch so that the accessories of feasts may never become of primary importance, which is a deplorable abuse to which Our Lord seemed to allude when He said : *The life is more than the meat* (1) and the Apostle also when he wrote these words : *The kingdom of God is not meat and drink* (2).

POINT III. — JESUS OFFERS HIMSELF BY THE HANDS OF MARY.

CONSIDERATIONS. While Mary presented and sacrificed her well-beloved Child to God the

(1) Luke, xii, 23. — (2) Rom., xiv, 17.

Father, He Himself possessing the full and perfect use of His reason though He did not give evidence of it, offered Himself to His heavenly Father by the hands of Mary as the supreme Victim of which all the preceding ones had been but the figure.

APPLICATIONS. Jesus desired that all His mortal life without even the exception of His most tender Infancy should be a continual self-sacrifice, an uninterrupted act of love. But we have begun late to love him, to devote ourselves to His holy service. Would that we had not so much indifference and so many infidelities with which to reproach ourselves since we gave ourselves wholly to him. Yet we must not be discouraged. With the help of grace we can repair our negligences and past faults by an increase of fervour and generosity. Let us resolve to do it from this very day.

COLLOQUY. With Our Blessed Lady. — Beg her to offer us to Jesus, to intercede for us and to obtain for us the spirit of sacrifice, mortification and fervour.

JANUARY 17th.

THE MEETING OF SIMEON

AND THE INFANT JESUS IN THE TEMPLE.

I. *Prelude.* See Simeon holding the Infant Jesus in his arms.

II. *Prelude.* Ask for grace to share in the favours with which that holy old man was overwhelmed.

POINT I. — THE OLD MAN SIMEON LED BY THE HOLY GHOST.

CONSIDERATIONS. St. Luke says that *there was a man in Jerusalem named Simeon, and*

this man was just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel : and the Holy Ghost was in him (1). And he came by the Spirit into the temple... when his parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him according to the custom of the law (2). How was it that the holy old man came into the temple on the very day, at the hour and the moment when Mary entered with the Infant Jesus? It was because he was led by the Spirit of God. Who by hidden inspirations directed all his steps and all his actions, a favour he merited by his piety, his ardent faith and his habitual docility to the inspirations of grace.

APPLICATIONS. Happy is the man who has the Holy Spirit as his guide! How many dangers he escapes, and how many opportunities are granted him daily to practise virtue and to grow in merit! The Christian who is led by the spirit of the world falls on the contrary, from one error into another, from precipice to precipice. Has not experience proved the truth of this to you?

AFFECTIONS. Deign, O Lord, to guide and direct me in all things according to Thy Holy Spirit.

RESOLUTIONS. I desire to try to merit this favour by piety, recollection, and docility to the inspirations of grace.

POINT II. — THE OLD MAN SIMEON ENLIGHTENED
BY THE HOLY SPIRIT.

CONSIDERATIONS. In the eyes of men, the Divine Infant that Mary held in her arms had

(1) Luke, II, 25. — (2) Ibid., 27.

nothing to distinguish Him from other children. His Divinity was veiled under the appearance of our feeble humanity. Therefore He passed unnoticed by the priests and assistants. Simeon alone, suddenly enlightened by the Holy Ghost, pierced the veil and recognised in that weak Infant the Word made Flesh, the Messiah expected for four thousand years, and exclaimed : *Now thou dost dismiss thy servant, O Lord according to thy word in peace. Because my eyes have seen thy salvation, which thou hast prepared before the face of all peoples : A light to the revelation of the gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel* (1).

APPLICATIONS. What a difference there is between the worldly scholar famed for his so-called learning, and the holy man who is illumined by the light of the Spirit of God. The one sees only with the eyes of the body, the other sees with the eyes of faith as well. The one only sees in creatures what is material or outwardly attractive and loves these things, the other sees in them the Infinite Perfections of God and raises himself unceasingly by means of creatures to the beauty of the Creator. To which of these two categories do you belong?

AFFECTIONS. *Come, O Creator Spirit blest, come with Thy grace and heavenly aid, so shall we not with Thee for guide, turn from the path of life aside* (2).

RESOLUTIONS. I will invoke the Holy Spirit

(1) Luke, II, 29-32.

(2) Hymn for the feast of Pentecost and its Octave for Vespers.

faithfully in my doubts and perplexities. I will endeavour to admire God's perfections in creatures.

POINT III. — HOLY SIMEON OVERWHELMED WITH FAVOURS
BY THE HOLY GHOST.

CONSIDERATIONS. St. Luke adds that Simeon *had received an answer from the Holy Ghost, that he should not see death, before he had seen the Christ of the Lord* (1). God is faithful to His promises. He usually gives more than He promises. We have proof of this here, for not only was it granted to Simeon to see the Infant Jesus, but also to receive Him in his arms. *He also took him into his arms* (2), says St. Luke. What indescribable joy must have inundated his soul, and with how many graces and favours must he have been overwhelmed at that moment! And how precious his death must have been in God's sight, how full of joy and consolation!

APPLICATIONS. What won so many extraordinary favours for Simeon was, according to the sacred text, a life spent wholly in the love and service of God. If your life has not always been such, let it at least be so henceforth and you will have a firm hope or rather the assurance that you will die also in the peace and joy of God.

COLLOQUY. With the holy and blessed Simeon in accordance with the inspirations you have experienced in the meditation.

(1) Luke, ii, 26. — (2) Ibid., 28.

JANUARY 18th.

ON THESE WORDS OF SIMEON :

« NUNC DIMITTIS SERVUM TUUM
IN PACE ».

I. *Prelude.* Hear Simeon saying these words : *Now thou dost dismiss thy servant, O Lord, according to thy word in peace* (1).

II. *Prelude.* Ask for grace to participate in the dispositions of this holy man at your death.

POINT I. — TWO DISPOSITIONS RELATING TO DEATH.

CONSIDERATIONS. *Now thou dost dismiss thy servant in peace* (2). After he has seen the promised Redeemer, Simeon asks leave to die. He considers he is merely a captive now, who longs to leave prison. It is a fact that since Adam's sin, this earthly body which served as a palace for the soul in the state of innocence, is no longer anything but a prison full of darkness and wretchedness. The Christian who is unfaithful to his duties alone leaves it with regret, like criminals of the State who have nothing but the sentence of capital punishment to expect from their judges. The faithful Christian on the contrary, leaves it not only with resignation but with joy, like the prisoner leaving his cell when he has been the victim of calumny, and for whom the judgment to be undergone will be a reinstatement and triumph.

APPLICATIONS. Which of the two will you re-

(1) Luke, II, 29. — (2) Ibid.

seemble at the supreme moment? What will your dispositions be then? You say that the future is unknown to you. That is true. Nevertheless, as death is usually the echo of life, ask yourself what your dispositions and fate would be if you had to appear at the present moment before the supreme Judge. And you will know what remains for you to do so that at your death you may have nothing to fear, but everything to hope for.

AFFECTIONS. Express the desire to know yourself well and to attain greater perfection.

RESOLUTIONS. To detach your heart ever more and more from every inordinate and earthly affection.

POINT II. — TWO LEGITIMATE MOTIVES FOR DESIRING DEATH.

CONSIDERATIONS. *Who shall deliver me from the body of this death* (1). *Having a desire to be dissolved and to be with Christ* (2). In these two texts, or rather in this twofold sigh which escaped from the heart of the Apostle, we find two legitimate motives for desiring death. The first is to be set free from the miseries of this life, above all from the necessity of struggling incessantly against the desires of the flesh and the rebellion of the senses. The second is to see Jesus, the Spouse of our souls, in His glory, to be more intimately united to Him and to be able to love Him with a more perfect and indefectible love. These two motives are legitimate, but the second is more perfect than the first.

APPLICATIONS. We are Christians. At our bap-

(1) *Rom.*, vii, 24. — (2) *Philip.*, i, 23.

tism we renounced all the pomps and sinful joys of the world. Moreover, we constantly complain of the sufferings in soul and body which are inseparable from our lives and yet we are still so much attached to the world. We fear to leave it, to pass through the valley of death which must and which alone can lead us to the joys of paradise promised by Jesus Christ. From whence can this come except from our want of faith and confidence? It is to us also that Jesus addresses this reproach : *O thou of little faith, why didst thou doubt* (1)?

AFFECTIONS. Let us raise ourselves on the wings of faith to the contemplation of the ineffable blessings of heaven. Let us sigh for the moment when we shall be united to Jesus and possess Him for ever in His heavenly glory.

RESOLUTIONS. To bear the miseries of this life bravely while awaiting the joys of paradise.

POINT III. — TWO MEANS OF SECURING A GOOD DEATH.

CONSIDERATIONS. St. Augustine says that it is impossible for a man who has lived well to die badly. Therefore the chief and surest means to obtain a good and holy death is to live as a good and fervent Christian. Otherwise there is nothing but delusion or presumption, for rarely does a man die well if he has lived badly, the same Saint adds. The second means is indicated by these words of the author of the *Imitation* : *Blessed is he that hath always the hour of his death before his eyes* (2). Obviously it consists in a frequent remembrance of the thought of death, above all in difficult temptations when

(1) Matt., xiv, 31. — (2) Book I, 23.

we should ask ourselves : What shall I think of this at the hour of my death ?

APPLICATIONS. See to what extent you are solicitous and faithful in practising these means of obtaining a holy death, the most precious of all blessings. Weigh the importance of it well and you will be faithful. You will spend each day as, at the hour of death, you will desire to have spent it.

COLLOQUY. With St. Joseph, the patron of a good death.

JANUARY 19th.

THE PROPHECIES OF HOLY SIMEON.

I. *Prelude.* The Blessed Virgin listens to the words of the holy old man Simeon.

II. *Prelude.* Ask for grace to understand the mysteries revealed to us by faith.

POINT I. — THE PROPHECIES REGARDING JESUS.

CONSIDERATIONS. In giving back the Infant Jesus to Mary, Simeon suddenly enlightened regarding the future, said these memorable words : *This child is set for the fall, and for the resurrection of many in Israel, and for a sign which shall be contradicted* (1). This prophetic saying has been continually fulfilled throughout the twenty centuries which separate us from the day on which it was uttered. We see its fulfilment still, and in a special manner, in the times in which we live, for they are times both of wonderful conversions or spiritual resurrections performed by the zeal of mission-

(1) Luke, II, 34.

aries. — and or a systematic, impious and cruel opposition to the Church of Jesus Christ even by those who are numbered amongst her children.

APPLICATIONS. But is it possible that Jesus, our loving Saviour can become the cause of spiritual ruin for a child of the Catholic Church, even yourself if you are not careful? Yes, the history of the Church supplies us unfortunately with but too many proofs. She even shows us many who have been devout who, by falling away little by little from their first fervour, have sunk into grave sins, becoming the living contradiction of the maxims of Jesus Christ, and whose ruin has been all the more fatal and terrible because they had been overwhelmed with graces and blessings.

AFFECTIONS. Distrust of ourselves. — Protestations of fidelity. — Recourse to God.

RESOLUTIONS. To be ever humble and docile under the almighty hand of God for fear of falling into delusions, spiritual lukewarmness and infidelity.

POINT II. — THE PROPHECIES REGARDING MARY.

CONSIDERATIONS. After holy Simeon had spoken in prophetic spirit of the Infant Jesus, he turned to the Mother and she heard these heart-rending words : *and thy own soul a sword shall pierce* (1). That prophecy would only rightly speaking, be fulfilled on Calvary, where Mary's soul underwent the most unspeakable anguish, and suffered the most cruel of martyrdoms, when she saw her Divine Son die on

(1) Luke, ii, 35.

the Cross and was unable to die with Him. But cannot it be said that this martyrdom by the foreknowledge given her, commenced from this day, and was consequently a martyrdom of thirty-three years? A martyrdom without a parallel, and all the more meritorious in God's sight because it was unknown to men, because no one could share it, nor consequently alleviate its bitterness.

APPLICATIONS. When you complain of sufferings of soul or body which are hidden from the sight of men, and with which no one can therefore sympathise, console yourself with the thought that you bear some resemblance to your Mother. Console yourself with her in the thought that God is a witness of your sufferings, and that He accepts your offer to bear them all your life for love of Him. What merit an unknown martyrdom has before God, and what indescribable sweetness for the Christian who desires it to be known to God alone! What has been your view and how have you acted in times of trial and desolation?

AFFECTIONS. Queen of martyrs, pray for me who find it so difficult to suffer in silence, and to do without human consolations.

RESOLUTIONS. Henceforth I shall better imitate my wonderful Mother, at least by silence and resignation in my afflictions.

POINT III. — THE PROPHECIES IN REGARD TO MANKIND.

CONSIDERATIONS. And then Simeon added *that out of many hearts thoughts may be revealed* (1). That is, when persecution rages against

(1) Luke, ii, 35.

Jesus and His disciples, the true dispositions of the hearts of those who call themselves His children will be made manifest. Then it will be seen if they truly loved God, if they were really disposed to lose and sacrifice everything : their possessions, peace, health, parents, reputation, life itself—rather than displease, forsake and lose Him by sin.

APPLICATIONS. Perhaps your love of God has not been able to withstand a reproof or a jest, or even the fear of men's disapproval? Humble yourself before God for your want of constancy, firmness and generosity; try to ever keep in mind these words of Jesus Christ : *Fear ye not them that kill the body and are not able to kill the soul : but rather fear Him that can destroy both soul and body into hell* (1). They will maintain in your heart the courage and energy which are so necessary for the success of your principal concern, that of your eternal salvation.

COLLOQUY. With Jesus, the Author of your salvation, and with His holy Mother, whom He has appointed the dispenser of His graces.

JANUARY 20th.

THE IMPORTANCE OF SALVATION.

I. *Prelude.* Hear Jesus saying these words : *Seek ye therefore first the Kingdom of God and His justice* (2).

II. *Prelude.* Ask for a firm will, so that you may make your conduct agree with this Divine precept.

(1) Matt. x. 28. — (2) Matt. vi. 33.

POINT I.

CONSIDERATIONS. The matter of your salvation is unquestionably the most important of all because it is a matter of eternity.

To pass from this world into a blessed eternity and thus escape eternal punishment is what is understood by the words : *Work out your salvation* (1). The matter of salvation then, is a matter of eternity, the eternity of our soul and of our body. All other matters however important we may consider them are, and can only be, matters of time. And what is time, what are sixty or eighty years compared to eternity?

APPLICATIONS. What blindness and folly it would be therefore to be more occupied and anxious over temporal interests, than over those of eternity ! To lose, or even to expose ourselves to the danger of losing eternal salvation, by momentarily enjoying some earthly possessions, or some self-indulgent pleasures ! Nevertheless this is the blindness and folly of most men. Observe what takes place around you. Has not this been your folly ? Is this not still the case in more ways than one ?

AFFECTIONS. Deplore the waywardness of men ; grieve for your own past waywardness and your present indifference.

RESOLUTIONS. To seek throughout this year, twenty days of which have already passed, to please God in all things and before all, and lay up treasures for eternity according to the precept of Jesus Christ : *Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His justice* (2).

(1) *Philipp.*, II, 12. — (2) *Matt.*, VI, 33.

POINT II.

CONSIDERATIONS. The matter of your salvation is unquestionably the most important of all, because if once lost, it is lost for ever.

There is a remedy for any other misfortune, — a piece of work badly done can be done over again; a lost fortune can be recovered, a house which has been burned down can be rebuilt; but in the case of salvation once lost the harm is irremediable : To perish once is to perish for all eternity. We cannot come back to life, we cannot leave hell. *These shall go into everlasting punishment*, says Jesus Christ (1).

APPLICATIONS. What conclusion do we draw from this consideration? St. Paul tells us, *With fear and trembling work out your salvation* (2). And do not think that you should apply this conclusion less severely to yourself because your dispositions are good, or even excellent at present, for the Apostle applied it to himself though he was confirmed in grace. *I chastise my body*, he writes to the Corinthians, *and bring it into subjection : lest perhaps when I have preached to others, I myself should become a castaway* (3). Ah! we should never think we have done enough when it concerns eternity, exclaims Pope St. Gregory. Besides, did not angels sin in heaven, and did they not fall from heaven into hell?

AFFECTIONS. To have a salutary fear and great distrust of self in the matter of salvation.

RESOLUTIONS. To apply our attention care-

(1) Matt., xxv, 46. — (2) *Filipp.*, ii, 12. — (3) *I Corin.*, ix, 27.

fully to know and subdue our inordinate inclinations, which are the greatest obstacles to salvation.

POINT III.

CONSIDERATIONS. The matter of salvation is the most important of all because it is the only thing absolutely necessary.

Many things are relatively necessary : you have been entrusted with a task, so you are bound in conscience to do what it requires of you. That is necessary, but not absolutely necessary. God can do without you ; others can do it for you. What alone is absolutely needful is that you should be saved, you yourself working for your salvation. It is a personal matter. No one can do it for you, neither your parents nor your children, nor your friends nor your director, nor God Himself. « He who hath created thee without thy help », says St. Augustine, « will not save thee without it ».

APPLICATIONS. Woe therefore to the Christian who does not possess these principles nor the desire for his own sanctification ! Respect for the conventions of society, the fear of being compromised may, it is true, keep him within the limits of outward observance, but cannot save nor sanctify him. There is reason to fear therefore that though surrounded by so many means of salvation, he yet may be lost. *Be watchful over thyself*, says the author of *Imitation*, *Stir up thyself, warn thyself, and whatsoever becometh of others, neglect not thyself. Remember always thy end, and how that time lost returneth not* (1)

(1) Book I, xxv.

COLLOQUY. With the Saint of the day, the illustrious martyr Sebastian who to insure his salvation sacrificed the friendship of Roman emperors, suffered himself to be pierced with arrows, and died joyfully in the most terrible sufferings (in the year 288).

JANUARY 21st.

HOW THE IMPORTANCE OF THE QUESTION OF SALVATION CAN BE UNDERSTOOD.

I. *Prelude.* Hear these words from the lips of Jesus : *The Kingdom of heaven suffereth violence* (1).

II. *Prelude.* Ask for grace to really understand your dispositions regarding the matter of salvation.

POINT I.

CONSIDERATIONS. He who has taken a question of great importance to heart, for example, a lawsuit on which his fortune depends, is at all times and everywhere thinking of it. The thought of it pursues him day and night, even against his will, even in his moments of pleasure, in his conversations, his walks, his meals, and his work. It is his first thought in the morning, his last thought at night. In a word, he is absolutely engrossed by it.

APPLICATIONS. Do you find this earnestness regarding the question of salvation in yourself? Does the thought of this great question accompany you everywhere? Is it generally your first thought on waking in the morning, your last

(1) Matt., xi, 12.

before closing your eyes? If this is not the case, if your mind is most often occupied merely with vain, earthly or worldly thoughts, judge for yourself if it be true that the question of salvation in reality fills your heart more than any other. See what you must hope for or fear in your eternity.

AFFECTIONS. Astonishment and shame at the thought that I am usually engaged with such useless thoughts, and seldom with the great thought of my salvation and sanctification.

RESOLUTIONS. To make this thought which was of such use to St. Louis Gonzaga, as familiar one of ours : « How will this profit my eternal salvation ? »

POINT II.

CONSIDERATIONS. He who has taken a question of great importance to heart, is always afraid it may fail, or that some thing unforeseen may prevent its success. And the more important that question is, the greater his uneasiness and apprehension. That is a fact proved by everyday experience.

APPLICATIONS. You have no question more important than that of your salvation. You acknowledge this, but if it causes you no fear nor uneasiness while others things trouble you daily, is it not a sure proof that you do not sufficiently appreciate its importance, or that you are far from having it at heart above all other matters? And should you not come to the conclusion that the security in which you live is a delusion, and that you should be all the more afraid because you do not fear enough? For, after all, he who is not afraid of failing

takes no precautions, nor serious means to succeed; he takes no trouble. Meanwhile salvation is only secured at the cost of generous and vigorous efforts, according to these words of Jesus Christ : *The Kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent bear it away* (1).

AFFECTIONS. I shall ask with holy King David, never more to live in a false security : *Pierce thou my flesh with Thy fear* (2) and *Enlarge my eyes that I never sleep in death* (3).

RESOLUTIONS. I shall try to put this counsel of the Holy Spirit into practice : *Be thou in the fear of the Lord all the day long, because thou shalt have hope in the latter end* (4).

POINT III.

CONSIDERATIONS. He that takes a question of great importance to heart thinks he has never done enough to ensure its success. Observe a man engaged in a lawsuit concerning his fortune : he seeks and contrives new means of defending it unceasingly. After consulting, he consults again; the most expert lawyers hardly succeed in reassuring him. Every day, every hour, every moment, so to to speak, suggests new expedients to him, new defences, new resources, the least of which he does not disdain. He never thinks he has done enough. Is this picture exaggerated?

APPLICATIONS. With greater reason, if you have the question of your salvation and your eternity very much at heart, you will never allow yourself an unjustifiable tranquillity.

(1) Matt., xi, 12. — (2) Ps., cxviii, 120. — (3) Ps., xii, 4.
— (4) Prov., xxiii, 17-18.

Far from imitating the negligent and lukewarm Christian who is content with merely doing exactly what is prescribed, you will never think you have taken enough precautions, made use of enough means, nor done enough to obtain that final perseverance on which eternal salvation depends. You admit this consequence or practical conclusion; but does your conduct correspond with it? In all sincerity seek for an answer to this question. Your examination will help to make you more generous in God's service.

COLLOQUY. With St. Louis Gonzaga. — This holy youth united a most rigorous penance to a wonderful innocence and fervour; and yet he was always afraid of doing less than he should or could do to ensure his salvation. Ask him to obtain for you the spirit of penance, as you may perhaps have compromised the question of your salvation by many great sins.

JANUARY 22nd.

THE FLIGHT OF THE HOLY FAMILY

INTO EGYPT.

I. *Prelude.* Imagine the Holy Family receiving the command to fly into Egypt.

II. *Prelude.* Ask for the faith and resignation of which they give us an example.

POINT I. — THE HOLY FAMILY RECEIVE THE COMMAND TO DEPART.

CONSIDERATIONS. *An angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in sleep saying, Arise and take*

the Child and his mother, and fly into Egypt (1). Although poor, Joseph and Mary lived happily in the company of Jesus. They had no fears nor misgivings. Meanwhile, *Herod perceiving that he was deluded by the wise men* (2), had taken measures to put the Infant to death. But God watched over those who had been entrusted with the care of Him. He revealed Herod's schemes to them, and showed them the way to frustrate them.

APPLICATIONS. Let us learn here to understand the economy of God's Providence in regard to His servants. He has not promised to spare them from afflictions, and persecutions, but He has undertaken to watch over them, to guide them through their rightful superiors and to contrive to make all things work together for their good. Besides, when He pleases, He will defeat the conspiracies of the wicked, even in the most extreme dangers. The proof of this is given us in the account of the flight into Egypt, in innumerable facts revealed by Holy Scripture, and in the history of the Church.

AFFECTIONS. Fervent faith and absolute trust in Divine Providence.

RESOLUTIONS. In public calamities as well in personal trials, I shall think and act according to the immutable principles of faith.

POINT II. — THE COMMAND TO FLY IS IMPARTED
BY JOSEPH TO MARY.

CONSIDERATIONS. *An angel of the Lord appeared in sleep to Joseph saying : Fly into*

(1) Matt., ii, 13. — (2) Ibid., 16.

Egypt (1). Why did the angel not impart this command to Mary who was more holy and more dear to God than Joseph? Because he, in his capacity of Mary's spouse was the head of the Holy Family, and because it is ordained that inferiors should be directed by superiors even when the latter are inferior to them in merit. Because it is not to the merit of a man that we ought to confide the direction of our souls, but to God in the person of those who are in His place, regarding whom He said : *He that heareth you, heareth me* (2).

APPLICATIONS. Do I always conform to this doctrine and to this command ordained by God? Do I not sometimes obey unwillingly, or am I not sometimes wanting in respect towards those who have authority over me because I imagine, rightly, or wrongly, that they are not as good as I am? By acting in this way, I show plainly that I do not understand the economy of the order ordained by God; that I have a most imperfect idea of the virtue of obedience, and that my acts of submission have more often been acts of human deference and courtesy than acts of supernatural virtue which alone are worthy of reward.

AFFECTIONS. A declaration of absolute fidelity to the order established by God.

RESOLUTIONS. I shall try to see in all those who are placed over me the representatives of God, not taking into consideration the faults to which they may be liable, for none are free from some imperfection.

(1) Matth., ii, 13. — (2) Luke, x, 16.

POINT III. — REFLECTIONS ON THE COMMAND
GIVEN TO JOSEPH.

CONSIDERATIONS. *Fly into Egypt; and be there until I shall tell thee* (1). Observe how on the one hand the angel demands an act of blind obedience from Joseph and Mary by keeping the length of their exile hidden from them : Be there until I shall tell thee to return ; and how on the other hand he explains to them clearly the reason which prompted such a stern command : *For it will come to pass that Herod will seek the child to destroy Him* (2).

APPLICATIONS. Let us conclude from this that those who have a right to command us may or may not give their reasons for their commands, as many times prudence does not allow them to disclose their motives. Sometimes on the contrary, it is better for them to explain, either to make the urgency, or the manner of performing the given order better understood, or else to condescend to the weakness or imperfection of their inferiors. If these have a just idea of the merit of obedience, they will prefer not to have the reasons for the orders given. We see that this is the desire of the Saints. Let us do likewise, and ever aspire to the most perfect obedience.

COLLOQUY. With the Blessed Virgin and St. Joseph : Beg them to obtain for us the grace to constantly aspire to perfect obedience, and to accept all the dispositions of Divine Providence manifested by obedience, or by the ordinary routine of life in a spirit of faith, with simplicity and complete submission.

(1) Matt., ii, 13. — (2) Ibid.

JANUARY 23rd.

THE ADMIRABLE OBEDIENCE

OF JOSEPH AND MARY.

- I. *Prelude.* See the Holy Family on their way to Egypt.
II. *Prelude.* Ask for grace to excel in obedience.

POINT I.

CONSIDERATIONS. Joseph and Mary obey blindly : with entire and perfect submission of judgment. They do not ask either directly nor indirectly why God does not hold Herod's arm rather than compel them to emigrate ; and if the exile is absolutely necessary, why they have not been told to go into the Magi's country where they are known, rather than to Egypt, where the inhabitants were hostile to the people of Israel : nor why the command to fly had not been made known to them in time to enable them to make preparations for the journey. God has spoken by His delegate : for them, that is enough. They do not think of anything but obeying, convinced that there is nothing more perfect than to do what God wills, because He wills it, and as He wills it.

APPLICATIONS. Let us try to obey like Mary and Joseph, not only bravely but also blindly, that is to say without seeking the why and wherefore of what is commanded, or of the crosses which it pleases God to lay on us. For

after all, when we only obey a command after having asked for the reason of it and because the thing seems good and useful, we obey our own judgment rather than the will of God, and we no longer, strictly speaking, do what God wills because He wills it, and as He wills it; therefore from that time our obedience and submission lose much of their merit.

AFFECTIONS. Let us assist our faith, and sustain our courage in trials by saying with Jesus Christ : *Yea, Father, for so hath it seemed good in Thy sight* (1).

RESOLUTIONS. Always to distinguish clearly between the principle of the virtue of obedience which makes us see God in those through whom He directs us, and the act of our obedience.

POINT II.

CONSIDERATIONS. They obey promptly : without allowing any time to elapse between the command they have received and its execution. As soon as Joseph clearly understands the command announced by the messenger from Heaven, he rises instantly to tell Mary. She immediately obeys the command without even asking for an hour in which to make preparations for the journey, which is a long and difficult one ; she entrusts herself to Joseph's guidance, and both set out that very night without waiting for the first glimmer of dawn. Joseph's prompt and admirable obedience, is recorded by St. Matthew in these few words : *Who*

(1) Matt., xi, 26.

arose and took the child and His mother by night and retired into Egypt (1).

APPLICATIONS. Is your own obedience modelled on that of St. Joseph and Our Lady? How prompt are you, or rather how slow are you in obeying the command of your parents, your masters or mistresses? — in getting up in the morning, in saying your prayers, in attending Divine Services, and even the Mass of obligation? Besides, is there no delay in fulfilling certain of your duties? Consequently, forgetfulness, disturbances and disorders follow in your family, in your affairs, and serious inconveniences are the result. — If St. Joseph had not obeyed the voice of the Angel promptly, to how many dangers might the sacred charge confided to him have been exposed?

AFFECTIONS. At the thought of such prompt and perfect obedience from Joseph and Mary in such difficult circumstances, I shall be ashamed of the serious and innumerable defects in my obedience, and shall ask forgiveness for them.

RESOLUTIONS. From this day I shall try to obey with great promptitude even in the smallest matters.

POINT III.

CONSIDERATIONS. They obey generously without uttering a murmur, without showing regret or sorrow at being obliged to leave their relations and friends so abruptly, and without showing the least uneasiness or alarm in regard to the future. It is because Jesus is everything to them, and they are convinced that with

(1) Matt., ii, 14.

Him they will overcome all difficulties, that they will want for nothing, and no enemy can harm them.

APPLICATIONS. Let us always remember that God, in exchange for the sacrifice we make of our will, our liberty, or our views, has undertaken to guide us by our superiors to the end of our pilgrimage, to our heavenly home. That thought will make every fear and hesitation disappear; we too shall obey generously and always successfully. Assured of the assistance of Almighty God, we shall exclaim with the Apostle, when anything seems impossible to us : *I can do all things in Him Who strengtheneth me* (1). Let us enter into these holy dispositions and remain in them.

COLLOQUY. With the angel who announced the command to the Holy Family to fly into Egypt, and who was a witness of their admirable obedience. Beg him to obtain for you the grace not only to understand thoroughly all that is instructive in the example given here by Joseph and Mary, but also the courage to conform your obedience to that of these glorious examples.

JANUARY 24th.

ON THREE KINDS OF OBEDIENCE

I. *Prelude.* Hear the Apostle saying these words : *Be obedient in the simplicity of your heart, as to Christ* (2).

II. *Prelude.* Ask earnestly for the spirit of true obedience as the fruit of this meditation.

(1) *Philipp.*, iv, 13. — (2) *Ephes.*, vi, 5.

POINT I. — SERVILE OBEDIENCE.

CONSIDERATIONS. Servile obedience as the word indicates, proceeds from fear, not of God but of men; from fear of punishment, reproof, humiliation, or the privation of some favour. That is the obedience of hired men. So long as they are under their master's observation, they do what has been commanded, they conform to the orders given them; but the moment they find themselves alone, they become unfaithful and only follow their own caprices. In this there is obviously neither the virtue nor the merit of obedience. There is only compulsion and servility.

APPLICATIONS. Perhaps you may think that your obedience had nothing in common with this base servility, this simulated obedience. In order to be certain ask yourself: When I am alone, and I think unseen by anyone, am I as faithful in fulfilling my duties as when I am seen by those to whom I owe some obedience and submission? — If the contrary happens often, is it not an indication that servile fear enters somewhat if not greatly, into the motives of my obedience?

AFFECTIONS. Shame and repentance.

RESOLUTIONS. I shall often examine myself on the motives which urge me to fulfil my duties, so that they may be free from any touch of human fear or servility.

POINT II. — SUBTLE OBEDIENCE.

CONSIDERATIONS. This second kind of obedience proceeds from the maxim: it is always a good

thing to be on good terms with those on whom we are dependant; it is the way to avoid unpleasantness, and to secure small favours. — This obedience is therefore entirely human; it has nothing in common, any more than the first, with the virtue of obedience. It is merely selfishness. It is cleverness according to the world; before God it is hypocrisy.

APPLICATIONS. Has your own obedience always been free from subtlety and duplicity? In serving men, do you try to please them out of consideration for God or for yourself? Do you think of those who have authority over you in the way that you speak of them? Do you speak of them as you do to them? Do you not criticise inwardly, or what is worse, criticise in conversations with friends, that which you approve and praise in speaking to them? By these signs you can discover the value of your obedience.

AFFECTIONS. Humble yourself profoundly before God at the thought of the enormous imperfections there may have been in your obedience, and ask forgiveness for them.

RESOLUTIONS. Never to do anything for men solely with a view to pleasing them. To obey from motives suggested by faith.

POINT III. — SUPERNATURAL OBEDIENCE.

CONSIDERATIONS. This in the third kind of obedience, or rather it is the only one that deserves the name for it is the only real one, the only meritorious one, the only one pleasing to God and worthy of man. It is based on faith, on the incontrovertible principle of faith that God desires to govern men by other men whom

He has appointed in His place as the trustees and visible representatives of His supreme authority, so that all men may live in the dependance that is due to His sovereign majesty. It was of this obedience that St. Paul the Apostle unceasingly reminded the early Christians : *Wherefore be subject of necessity, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake* (1), he writes to the Romans. And to the Christians at Ephesus he writes : *Servants, be obedient to them that are your lords according to the flesh, with fear and trembling in the simplicity of your heart, as to Christ ; not serving to the eye, as it were pleasing men, but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart, with a good will serving as to the Lord, and not men* (2). He who obeys on this principle, does not therefore, rightly speaking, obey men, his equals, but God in the person of men. He can say : I only recognise God above me ; I only submit to and obey God.

APPLICATIONS. How great and noble the Christian is who obeys in this way, and how pleasing and meritorious, even in the smallest actions, is his obedience in God's sight. Renew your resolution to avoid carefully all that is inconsistent with this obedience, and thank God for having shown you what true greatness, merit and consolation it implies.

COLLOQUY. With your Guardian Angel who for ever enjoys the sight of God and does His adorable will so perfectly ; or with St. Timothy who was the faithful disciple of St. Paul, and whose feast is celebrated to-day.

(1) *Rom.*, XIII, 5. — (2) *Ephes.*, VI, 5-7.

JANUARY 25th.

THE RETURN

OF THE HOLY FAMILY TO JUDEA.

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I. *Prelude.* See the Holy Family on their way to the land of Israel.

II. *Prelude.* Ask for entire submission to the dispositions of Divine Providence.

POINT I. — JOSEPH'S CONSTANCY.

CONSIDERATIONS. Joseph remained in Egypt with the Child and Mary *until the death of Herod* (1) which took place four years after the massacre of the Innocents; but, it is commonly believed that he only received the command to return from Egypt three years after Herod's death. This long sojourn in a strange land, must have troubled Joseph and Mary not a little we would imagine, and made them long eagerly for the time to leave; but it was not so. This thought alone : We are where God wishes us to be made their sojourn in Egypt not only bearable but happy. Besides the Gospel does not suggest that they wanted for anything. Providence supplied all their needs.

APPLICATIONS. These reflections should teach you to live quietly in the places in which Providence has placed you, convinced that it is God who directs all the events of your lives. If you think at first that you cannot possibly get accustomed to new circumstances, promptly re-

(1) Matt., ii, 15.

sist these first unfavourable impressions; a few days effort will cause them to disappear completely. Resist resolutely also the strayings of your imagination in regard to projects of fortune and pleasure for many have become completely deluded by them.

AFFECTIONS. Do with me Lord, as Thou wilt, because I know that Thou lovest me (1).

RESOLUTIONS. Wherever I may be, I shall devote myself to my duties without troubling about the future. I shall encourage myself, when it is necessary, with this thought: I am where God wishes me to be; I am doing what God wishes me to do.

POINT II. — JOSEPH'S TRANQUILLITY.

CONSIDERATIONS. An angel appeared to Joseph in sleep in Egypt, saying: *Arise, and take the child and his mother, and go into the land of Israel* (2). It may be taken for granted (several of the Fathers affirm it) that God made Joseph known and respected in Egypt so that he could follow his calling usefully; that moreover, he was finally quite accustomed to his new surroundings, and that he was content and pleased with them. We can imagine then, that it must have been an effort when he was obliged to change his surroundings and undertake a long journey without knowing exactly where he would be able to settle. Nevertheless, he left all at the first injunction given by the Angel, without hesitating or troubling about the future.

APPLICATIONS. Probably it may happen to you also some day, that you cannot leave without

(1) St. Augustine. — (2) Matt., ii, 19-20.

sorrow a home and comfortable surroundings which have been made very dear to you. Also at a certain age, every change, even the most insignificant, is hard to nature, and often becomes the occasion of a very painful sacrifice. If this sacrifice is demanded of you, make it with entire willingness. Your generous submission will be greatly rewarded, as was that of St. Joseph.

AFFECTIONS. My Lord and my God, I desire to abandon myself wholly and for ever to the dispositions of Thy loving and Fatherly Providence.

RESOLUTIONS. I will acquire the habit of conquering all the repugnances of nature generously while the effort is not so great in order to be able to do so when I am older and it is more difficult.

POINT III. — JOSEPH'S PRUDENCE.

CONSIDERATIONS. But Joseph, hearing that Archelaus reigned in Judea... *was afraid to go thither* (1). He was afraid that the Child Jesus would not be safe in the domains of a prince who was the son and successor of Herod, whose cruelty he had inherited; on the other hand, *the land of Israel* (2) mentioned by the angel, comprised provinces governed by other small sovereigns. Which of these provinces should he choose? Where would he be most safe? Enlightenment fails him, so he seeks and finds it in prayer; a voice from heaven tells him to go into Galilee; *and coming he dwelt in a city called Nazareth* (3).

(1) Matt., ii, 22. — (2) Ibid., 20. — (3) Ibid., 23.

APPLICATIONS. St. Joseph's conduct on this occasion teaches us that we should act with caution in all things; that in doubt and perplexities after having deliberated maturely, we should before deciding, have recourse to humble and fervent prayer. How much remorse and tardy regret we should spare ourselves if we continually followed these rules of conduct! Let us then be faithful to them.

COLLOQUY. With St. Joseph, or with St. Paul the Apostle whose conversion is celebrated to-day.

JANUARY 26th.

THE HOLY FAMILY GOES TO THE TEMPLE

AT JERUSALEM.

I. *Prelude.* See the Holy Family prostrate in prayer in the Temple.

II. *Prelude.* Ask for lively faith and ardent piety in the Presence of Jesus hidden in our tabernacles.

POINT I. — ST. JOSEPH GOES TO CELEBRATE THE PASCH AT JERUSALEM.

CONSIDERATIONS. *And his parents went every year to Jerusalem at the solemn day of the pasch* (1) there to adore God in His temple. In order that everything should remind the Israelites, who had such a predisposition to idolatry, of the unity of God and the worship that was due to Him alone they were only allowed to erect one temple to the Lord, namely the Temple at Jerusalem. On the other hand, the

(1) Luke, ii, 41.

law obliged men and boys who had attained a certain age to go there three times a year : at the feasts of the Pasch, Pentecost, and Tabernacles (1). It was little, no doubt, but considering the long and toilsome journey which had to be taken by many, it was a great deal. Besides, devout men such as Joseph felt greatly not being able to go more often to satisfy their devotion.

APPLICATIONS. We, more fortunate than the Israelites, have churches and oratories dedicated to our Lord everywhere, where He dwells not only in the Spirit, as in the Temple, but in Person, although hidden from our eyes. We have only to take a few steps to reach one of them. He invites us tenderly to come to Him, as He desires to overwhelm us with His favours. How do we answer His invitation? How many times do we go to visit Him, to offer Him our homage and our supplications? Opportunities occur so often for this, quite naturally, when we pass by a church or public oratory. Do we not neglect them even perhaps when an inner voice tells us to take advantage of them?

AFFECTIONS. Esteem and rejoice in these words of Jesus : *Come unto me* (2), and these other words : *My delights are to be with the children of men* (3).

RESOLUTIONS. To practise the custom maintained in devout families, of being present at Holy Mass not only on Sundays, but every day of the week. This is the true way to gain the blessing of God on your family every day.

(1) *Deut.*, xvi, 16. — (2) *Matt.*, xi, 28. — (3) *Prov.*, viii, 31.

POINT II. — MARY ACCOMPANIES ST. JOSEPH.

CONSIDERATIONS. *His parents went every year to Jerusalem at the solemn day of the Pasch* (1). We see by these words of the Evangelist that Mary went also to fulfil the Paschal duty at Jerusalem, although the law was not binding on women. This shows that she was not content with merely doing her strict duty, but did what was most conformable to the glory of God, her own sanctification, and the edification of others.

APPLICATIONS. Mary's conduct should be the invariable rule of my conduct. The insistent doctrine of all the masters of the spiritual life is that, in order to advance in the ways of salvation and perfection, we must join what is supererogatory to what is obligatory not only in the matter of devotion, but also in the matter of mortification, charity, zeal and all the virtues. Have I followed this rule? Have I not rather confined myself to what was strictly obligatory! Have I not deprived myself of the gifts of God's liberality by proving so ungenerous? The danger of such conduct is that we often run the risk of being unfaithful to what is our strict obligation.

AFFECTIONS. Praise, and extol the generosity of God towards you. — Ask forgiveness for having responded so imperfectly.

RESOLUTIONS. I shall see how and in what way I can prove more generous to-day towards God.

POINT III. — JESUS AT THE AGE OF TWELVE YEARS
ACCOMPANIES MARY AND JOSEPH.

CONSIDERATIONS. Let us follow the Holy Fa-

(1) Luke, ii, 41.

mily in spirit on their holy pilgrimage to Jerusalem. What an impulse of love guides them, with what religious enthusiasm they mount the steps of the Temple! How serious and devout is their bearing! Sometimes prostrate, sometimes on their knees or standing with their eyes raised to heaven. Let us enter into their innermost thoughts and endeavour to form some idea of the ardent devotion with which they glorify God and thank Him for His blessings, offer themselves for the sins of the world, and ask for an abundance of Divine blessings on the people of Israel and on all men.

APPLICATIONS. What a beautiful example we have here before our eyes! It teaches us what our conduct and our feelings should be each time we appear before God in His church, above all during the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. To what extent have I imitated this example?

COLLOQUY. With the angels who contemplated the Holy Family with rapture for giving the world such a beautiful example of devotion. Ask them to present it to the eyes of your soul frequently in your meditations, in your visits to the Blessed Sacrament, and in all your religious duties.

JANUARY 27th.

JESUS LOST AND FOUND AGAIN

BY MARY AND JOSEPH IN THE TEMPLE.

I. *Prelude.* See Mary and Joseph going in search of the Child Jesus.

II. *Prelude.* Ask for grace to live for ever in intimate union with Jesus.

POINT I. — JESUS REMAINS IN JERUSALEM WITHOUT
THE KNOWLEDGE OF HIS PARENTS.

CONSIDERATIONS. The facts suggested by the Gospel to-day for our meditation are full, not only of mysteries, but of great instruction; for it pleased the Incarnate Word, says Pope St. Gregory, to instruct us by His actions no less than by His words : *Ipsa facta Verbi verba sunt*. Thus it is that by remaining in the city of Jerusalem without the knowledge of His parents, and notwithstanding the sorrow His absence would cause them, He desired to teach mankind to put the interests of God's glory above even the most intimate natural affections. He desired especially to teach those who aspire to Christian perfection, that they should die to the affections of flesh and blood, by changing the natural affection they may feel for their parents, relations, and benefactors, into spiritual love.

APPLICATIONS. To change filial and carnal affection into spiritual love is not to destroy it, but to perfect it and make it more fruitful; to make it in a certain sense Divine. Have I always thoroughly understood and practised this precept? Many people have become victims of grievous delusions because they have not understood it, or rather because they have practised it imperfectly.

AFFECTIONS. Thank God for having preserved you from being a victim to these delusions; ask Him for grace to be ever free from them.

RESOLUTIONS. In temptations arising from any inordinate attachment to my fellow-creatures,

I shall think of these words of Jesus Christ :
He that loveth his father and mother more than Me, is not worthy of Me (1).

POINT II. — HIS DESOLATE PARENTS
SEEK HIM FOR THREE DAYS.

CONSIDERATIONS. *Having fulfilled the seven days of the feast, says St. Luke, while Joseph and Mary were returning home in company with a great number of friends and inhabitants of Nazareth, the Child Jesus remained in Jerusalem; and his parents knew it not. And thinking that he was in the company, they came a day's journey; and when families were reunited in the inn as night came on they sought him amongst their kinsfolk and acquaintances. And not finding him, they returned to Jerusalem, seeking him* (2). Mary and Joseph loved Jesus with their whole hearts. He was everything to them; He was the life of their lives. When they were deprived of His gentle Presence, the world was nothing more than a mournful desert to them. How great then must have been their sorrow and anguish! Who can form any idea of it?

APPLICATIONS. How is it, that when you have lost Jesus by sin, you have been so little affected and distressed by it? Is it not because your love is weak, and because you are far from loving Him above all else? Besides, in the language of the Saints, to lose Jesus is not only to be separated from Him by mortal sin, to be less united to Him on account of some attachment to venial sin, but also to be deprived of the

(1) Matt., x, 37. — (2) Luke, ii, 43-45.

sweetness and consolation of His sensible Presence. We can lose Jesus in this third way through no fault of our own. The sighs and tears of the greatest servants of God prove it. *But, says the author of the Imitation, that we have no divine consolations at all, or do very seldom feel them, the fault is ours because we seek not after contrition of heart, nor do we altogether forsake vain and outward comforts (1).*

AFFECTIONS. Acknowledge that you do not deserve the favour of Divine consolations. Nevertheless ask humbly not to be deprived entirely of them.

RESOLUTIONS. To die more and more to worldly affections and to ourselves, so that Jesus may live in us, and we in Him.

POINT III. — THEY FIND HIM AGAIN IN THE TEMPLE.

CONSIDERATIONS. *After searching for three days, they found him in the temple sitting in the midst of the doctors, hearing them and asking them questions... His mother taking him aside, said to him, Son, why hast thou done so to us? behold thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing. And he saith to them : How is it that you sought me? did you not know that I must be about my Father's business (2)?*

APPLICATIONS. Mary and Joseph here teach us that we should never rest until we have found Jesus again when we have lost Him in one of the three ways indicated in the preceding Point. Have we done this? Jesus, on His part, teaches us to make all considerations of

(1) Book I, 21. — (2) Luke, ii, 46-49.

relationships and family yield before the service of God, to Whom we owe it wholly and before any one else. Have we constantly followed this rule of conduct?

COLLOQUY. With the zealous and illustrious St. John Chrysostom, whose feast is celebrated by the Church to-day.

JANUARY 28th.

JESUS LEAVES JERUSALEM

AND GOES TO LIVE IN NAZARETH.

I. *Prelude.* See the Child Jesus walking between Mary and Joseph.

II. *Prelude.* Pray that you may esteem and love retirement and modesty.

POINT I. — JESUS LEAVES THE CITY OF JERUSALEM.

CONSIDERATIONS. At the age of twelve, Jesus gave clear proof of His Divine Wisdom in the Temple even to the doctors of the law : *All that heard him were astonished at His wisdom and his answers* (1). We might think that this successful beginning would have induced Him to commence the course of His proaching. However He made nothing of it, but gave Himself into the hands of His parents as is natural for children of His age. He left the city and *went down with them* (2) far away from there, to bury Himself almost in isolation in Nazareth. He only left there long afterwards, at the moment appointed by the will of His heavenly Father, restraining meanwhile the great zeal

(1) Luke, ii, 47. — (2) *Ibid.*, 51.

which urged Him to hasten to the help of souls.

APPLICATIONS. Let us recall the reflection already made, that the actions of Jesus are lessons for us. What does He teach us in this? First that before bringing ourselves into notice and aspiring to train and reform others, we should train ourselves in our family life to good habits, to the interior life, to sound virtue and the knowledge of sanctity; secondly that even if we take this for granted, we should not devote ourselves inconsiderately to certain good works at the risk of falling into the snares of the devil, or of being lost ourselves while wishing to do good to others; thirdly that to do good works and neglect our duties to our family, to our parents, brothers or sisters, means to be ensnared by a serious delusion. — What have your feelings and conduct been in regard to these different points?

AFFECTIONS. O my God, if only I had always acted according to these teachings of Thy divine Son! How many mistakes, how much uneasiness of conscience should I have spared myself!

RESOLUTIONS. To avoid unnecessary expeditions, visits, and useless conversations.

POINT II. — JESUS RETURNS TO GALILEE.

CONSIDERATIONS. The day before yesterday we contemplated to our great edification, the Holy Family prostrate in prayer in the Temple. Let us contemplate them to-day on their way from Jerusalem to Galilee; here too, we shall find plenty of matter for edification. Fix your eyes first on Mary and Joseph with the Child

Jesus between them : what seriousness, what religious modesty in their walk and in all their bearing ! In the movements of their heads and their eyes we see nothing of that lightness and curiosity which are so natural to us and so hurtful. Then let us lend an ear to the conversations which at times interrupt their silence and prayer. They turn on the mysteries of the Kingdom of heaven : on the great things that Jesus had come to accomplish in the world for the glory of God. The answer given by the Child Jesus to His Mother : *Did you not know that I must be about my father's business* (1)? leads us to surmise this. Then if it were granted us to enter into their innermost thoughts, we should see them wholly engaged in holy affections and meditations. The Gospel attests this when it says of Our Lady in particular : *And his mother kept all these words in her heart* (2).

APPLICATIONS. To obtain some fruit from this contemplation, let us see in what way our conduct conforms with or is opposed to that of the Holy Family, when alone or in company, when we are away from home, or walking or travelling. Through this examination we shall see where we have failed, and where we should amend.

AFFECTIONS. Ardent desires to fulfil the precept of the Apostle wherever we may be : *Let your modesty be known to all men* (3).

RESOLUTIONS. To make a short examination of conscience on returning from expeditions or visits, especially on our intentions and our words.

(1) Luke, ii, 49. — (2) Ibid., 51. — (3) *Philip.*, iv, 5.

POINT III. — JESUS SETTLES IN NAZARETH.

CONSIDERATIONS. The Son of God Who chose as His birthplace that which is contemptible in men's estimation, — an abandoned stable — chose as His home for the space of about thirty years the little city of Nazareth in the land of Israel, of which it was said in derision : *Can anything of good come out of Nazareth* (1)?

APPLICATIONS. Why did Our Lord do this? Doubtless to shame the vanity which makes us desire and seek the company of the great of this world under pretexts which are more or less plausible, though in reality we do it to be known, appreciated and approved. Penetrate into your innermost heart; does it not tell you there is some truth in this? If it be so, how much reason there is for you to be ashamed! Jesus, Infinite Wisdom, shunned notice, admiration, and applause, and you seek them? Does not this insult Him, and do you incalculable harm by exposing you to the loss in a great measure, of the merit of your good works.

COLLOQUY. With the Guardian Angels of the Holy Family.

JANUARY 29th.

ON THE MYSTERY

OF THE HIDDEN LIFE OF JESUS

I. *Prelude*. Imagine the humble home at Nazareth where the Holy Family lived.

II. *Prelude*. Ask for grace to understand truly the great mystery of the hidden life of Jesus.

(1) John, 1, 46.

POINT I. — THE MYSTERY OF THE HIDDEN LIFE OF JESUS,

CONSIDERATIONS. Jesus came into the world not only to give life to mankind by His death, but also to bring them back to the knowledge of the Truth, to the worship and love of the true God by His Divine teaching.

He had to convert the world — and to fulfil this vast mission, only thirty-three years were granted to Him. Apparently there was no time to lose. Consequently we should have expected Him to make His appearance amongst men as soon as possible, as the Messenger of God and the teacher of the human race. But no; — and in this lies the mystery. Until the age of thirty he remained unknown to the whole world, living unnoticed in the obscurity of a workshop.

APPLICATIONS. When in contemplation, we are faced in spirit with the obscure retirement of Our Divine Saviour, we are tempted to say with the disciples. *Manifest Thyself to the world* (1) enlighten it, it is going to perdition while 'Thou doest nothing to save it, and precious time is being lost! And Jesus seems to answer. *Are you also yet without understanding* (2)? You say I do nothing. — Yet I am doing the will of my Father; know that this alone is great and commendable. — You say that I lose my time, yet I am teaching men, those above all, who in the future will aspire to perfection, to conquer their pride, to live without complaint or murmur, unknown and depised by the world in some corner out of sight,

(1) John, vii, 4. — (2) Matt., xv, 16.

if my Father's Providence permits or requires it. — After this, who can complain of not being noticed, praised and commended by the world for the good he is striving to do?

AFFECTIONS. I shall ask Jesus to forgive me for having spoken so ill-advisedly. I shall adore the mystery of His hidden life. I shall ask for self-forgetfulness, and contempt of self and of all that is not God, or that does not lead to God.

RESOLUTIONS. When I find I am obliged, owing to age or infirmities, to keep to my room, to be in a certain way, no longer in the world, I shall think of Jesus confined to the humble house at Nazereth. I shall comfort myself with the thought that I can still co-operate with Jesus for the good of souls by prayer, patience and resignation in my sufferings.

POINT II. — THE MEANING OF THE MYSTERY.

CONSIDERATIONS. In order to obtain a fuller understanding of the great mystery of the hidden life of Jesus, its purposes, and all the gratitude we should feel, let us recall that the evils of the world which Our Lord came to remedy were born of pride and that it is still pride which continually threatens to bring back the same disorders. Before anything else therefore He had to make men understand and make them desire the only effectual remedy against pride — humility. To this also His first lessons to the world were directed : *Learn of me*, He says, *because I am meek and humble of heart* (1). *Blessed are the poor in spirit* (2). *Whosoever*

(1) Matt., xi, 29 — (2) Matt., v, 3.

shall exalt himself shall be humbled, and the last in their own opinion shall be first in the Kingdom of God (1).

Above all He preached humility ; He proclaimed the absolute necessity of it. But if He had been satisfied with preaching it without putting it into practice, without teaching it in an exceptional manner by His example, we would have understood the lesson, but our pride, so deeply rooted in our souls would have resisted. We would have said : Jesus certainly preached humility, self-forgetfulness, contempt for the world and its disdain eloquently, but He Himself was high in public opinion, constantly admired, praised and commended. The lessons and exhortations of Our Saviour would have had no effect ; pride and all the evils which are born of it, would have continued their havoc.

APPLICATIONS. There is no one who does not feel the truth of this conclusion however little he may know himself. If he searches the depths of his heart, he must say to himself : If it be so difficult even with Jesus before my eyes so lowly, and apparently brought to nought in men's opinion, for me to conquer my pride, not to be troubled, not to complain when others are preferred to me, when reverses of fortune lower me in the world's opinion, when illness compels me to keep away from it, living in a kind of isolation, what would it have been had this Divine example not been given me ? How should I ever have been able to conquer my pride, to love and practise humility ?

COLLOQUY. With Jesus hidden and unknown

(1) Matt., XXIII, 12.

in Nazareth. Adore Him there. Thank Him for having helped us to understand the sublime lesson; for the powerful encouragement He gives us by that deep seclusion at Nazareth. Ask His forgiveness for having profited so little from it. Offer Him generous resolutions. Ask for grace to be faithful to them.

JANUARY 30th.

THE NATURE, MOTIVES, AND PRACTICE OF A RIGHT INTENTION.

I. *Prelude.* Hear St. Paul saying, *Do all to the glory of God* (1).

II. *Prelude.* Ask God to help you to acquire the habit of acting always with great purity of intention.

POINT I. — THE NATURE OF A RIGHT INTENTION.

CONSIDERATIONS. The ordinary life led by most people very much resembles that of Jesus in the home at Nazareth. Most of their days are occupied with the details and cares which their family, the housekeeping, and business claim from them; they lead a life hidden from the world. How can we, how should we sanctify it? Is it not principally by good intentions, which raise even our smallest actions in the sight of God? Try to understand the nature, motives and practice of a pure intention thoroughly. An intention is an act of will by which man aims at some end. If the end is good, so also is the intention; but in order that it may be meritorious before God, it is necessary that

(1) 1 *Corin.*, x, 31.

the end be supernatural, and that he who purposes to reach it be in a state of grace. Several supernatural ends may be kept in view at one time, which relate directly or indirectly to God. It may happen therefore that treasures of diverse merits may be gathered together in a single action.

APPLICATIONS. Because man is a rational being, he is supposed to work for a definite end; yet how great is the number of those who, without taking their intentions into account, habitually act from purely natural or vain intentions. Consequently what a loss of merits, for ever irretrievable! Do you not belong to this category of Christians who are so careless of their eternal interests?

AFFECTIONS. O Jesus, teach me to be great in the sight of Thy heavenly Father by the purity and excellence of my intentions, as Thou wert during the thirty years of Thy hidden life.

RESOLUTIONS. To watch carefully over myself so as to act with a pure intention in everything.

POINT II. — THE MOTIVES OF A PURE INTENTION.

CONSIDERATIONS. There are many motives which urge us and in a certain way, oblige us to act constantly with a pure intention. — First motive, nothing is more important : in fact, on the intention depends in a great measure, the merit of our actions before God, and consequently, the value of time which must determine our eternity, as time is but a succession of acts which constitute our short life in this world.

Second motive, nothing is more just : we

belong entirely to God ; consequently we should by means of a pure intention, refer everything to Him, even actions which are quite indifferent by their nature. *Therefore whether you eat or drink, says the Apostle, or whatsoever else you do, do all to the glory of God* (1).

Third motive, nothing is easier than to practise a pure intention in whatever state or position we may be in, as is proved in Point III.

APPLICATIONS. Take these motives into serious consideration ; weigh the value of each one separately and you will undoubtedly feel a stronger determination arising in you to aim at the practical perfection of all that is required by a pure intention ; especially as, granted the state of grace on which you are entitled to rely for protection, you should encounter no serious difficulty in carrying it out.

AFFECTIONS. Joy and gratitude for having felt drawn to the kind of life in which it is easy to remain in the friendship of God.

RESOLUTIONS. To make a particular examination from time to time on a pure intention.

POINT III. — THE PRACTICE OF A PURE INTENTION.

CONSIDERATIONS. Everything is included in two things which we should try to practise. In the first place it is necessary to make or borrow a definite formula which includes several intentions and to repeat it every morning with great earnestness ; then, to renew it frequently during the day in case it should become weakened or destroyed by vain-glory or self-love.

APPLICATIONS. Reflect on your own conduct ;

(1) I *Corin.*, x., 31.

examine yourself on these two practical points; are you in the habit of repeating a formula of good intentions every morning? Do you renew it frequently during the day? How many times do you renew it? — If necessary, do you make use of any practices in order that you should remember?

COLLOQUY. With St. Louis Gonzaga who gathered immense treasures of merits in a few years because all his actions, even the most indifferent, were sanctified by great purity of intention, the fruit of his close union with God. Beg and implore him to obtain you the grace to imitate him.

JANUARY 31st.

JESUS, THE MODEL OF OBEDIENCE

IN HIS HIDDEN LIFE.

I. *Prelude.* Contemplate the Child Jesus obeying Mary and Joseph with perfect willingness.

II. *Prelude.* Ask for the knowledge, esteem and practical love of the obedience of faith.

POINT I. — THE QUALITIES OF JESUS' OBEDIENCE.

CONSIDERATIONS. *He was subject to them* (1). In these words the Holy Spirit condensed and transmitted to future generations the history of Our Saviour's life until His thirtieth year. Everything seems to be reduced to obedience. It is because obedience is the only thorough proof of humility that Jesus desired to teach men by the mystery of His hidden life. Without humility we cannot please God : without obedience, we cannot flatter ourselves that we are humble.

(1) Luke, ii, 51.

And what should our obedience be like? Jesus digned to be a living model of it. Let us study this model carefully. *He was subject to them* : Who? The God of heaven and earth made man. To whom? To Mary and Joseph, certainly both eminent in sanctity, but nevertheless merely creatures, the work of His hands. In what? In everything; no exception is mentioned; and how did He obey! Promptly, completely, constantly, with love and with perfect grace.

APPLICATIONS. Imagine you hear Jesus saying to you : *I have given you an example that as I have done to you, so you do also* (1), then, by reflecting on your own conduct, see if your obedience is usually modelled on that of your Divine Master; if it has the same qualities; if it is the comfort and joy of those who are in authority over you, as the obedience of Jesus was the comfort and joy of Mary and Joseph.

AFFECTIONS. Admiration. — Gratitude. — Ardent desires to conform more and more to this Divine model.

RESOLUTIONS. I shall apply myself to destroying with great resolution, whatever is defective in the manner I obey.

POINT II. — THE PRINCIPLE OF JESUS' OBEDIENCE.

CONSIDERATIONS. Men's actions proceed from an interior principle or a determining motive. What was the principle of the Child Jesus' obedience, which was so noble and so perfect? Fear? Clearly not. Self-interest or the hope of reward? No, again. What had the Ruler of the Universe to fear or to hope for from men?

(1) John, XIII, 15.

What then was the principle of it? Solely the will of God His Father manifested by means of Mary and Joseph. Is not this the meaning of these well-known words of Our Lord : *Yea Father, for so hath it seemed good in Thy sight* (1) to give me Mary as my mother and Joseph as my adopted father. *Thy Will be done* (2). I desire to be subject to them in all things as to Thee, for love of Thee. Therefore rightly speaking, Jesus did not obey creatures in Mary and Joseph, but God His Father in the persons of Mary and Joseph.

APPLICATIONS. This is the true idea of supernatural obedience, of the obedience which proceeds from the principle of faith : that the invisible God desires to be represented by a visible authority; that He desires to govern men by other men invested by His authority, and of whom it is written : *He that heareth you, heareth Me ; He that despiseth you, despiseth Me* (3). To obey on this principle is great, noble and meritorious; it is to live dependent on God alone, in the person of superiors. Can you truthfully say that you have habitually obeyed in this way? Have you not obeyed sometimes, perhaps often, from purely human or natural motives, and consequently without nobility or merit before God?

AFFECTIONS. Give thanks to God for having shown us the meaning of true obedience. Ask for grace to excel in the spirit and constant practice of this holy obedience.

RESOLUTIONS. To examine yourself often on the principles and motives of your obedience.

(1) Matt., xi, 26. — (2) Matt., xxvi, 42. — (3) Luke, x, 16.

POINT III. — THE MERIT OF JESUS' OBEDIENCE.

CONSIDERATIONS. By perfect obedience from His most tender age, the Child Jesus enhanced the merit of the smallest of His actions in the eyes of His Father; and as time is nothing but an uninterrupted series of interior and exterior acts, what an immense treasure of merits did Jesus as Man acquire for us during the thirty years of His hidden life!

APPLICATIONS. God has put you in the world to give you the opportunity to acquire many merits for eternal life. Strive therefore to excel in the virtue of obedience which offers you such an easy way to attain the end for which you were created; while leading an ordinary life hidden from the eyes of the world you will gather together immense treasures for heaven, even if you have no other opportunity of doing striking acts of zeal, penance, or charity.

COLLOQUY. With Jesus, the perfect model of obedience. We shall find abundant material for this in the affections and resolutions of the first two points.

FEBRUARY 1st.

THE MODESTY, GENTLENESS AND PIETY
OF JESUS

IN HIS HIDDEN LIFE.

I. *Prelude.* Hear Jesus Christ saying these words *■ I have given you an example that as I have done to you, so you do also* (1).

II. *Prelude.* Ask for an ardent desire to reproduce in your self the gentleness, modesty and piety of Jesus.

(1) John, xiii, 15.

POINT I. — GENTLENESS OF JESUS.

CONSIDERATIONS. Jesus was not content with being the perfect model of obedience in His hidden life, for He gave us an example of several other virtues also, which the Christian who aims at perfection should try to acquire in the obscurity of his ordinary family life. The Holy Spirit mentions three in particular : gentleness, modesty and piety. *I beseech you by the mildness and modesty of Christ* (1), says the Apostle. And Isaias, speaking of the promised Messiah, says : *The spirit of... godliness... shall rest upon him* (2). How important then it is for us to examine the character of these virtues well, so that we may adopt them and excel in them. St. Thomas Aquinas says that gentleness is a virtue which implies a noble soul ; it makes those who possess it superior to all insults : even at the moment that they are insulted they neither lose their peace nor their tranquility of soul.

APPLICATIONS. Do you observe in yourself these marks of Christian gentleness? Does it not happen on the contrary that you give way frequently to annoyance, impatience, bitterness, anger, or calculated coldness towards those with whom you live for trifling reasons, or merely on the suspicion that they are slighting you? If that is the case, you will find enough to humble you, to repent of, and to amend.

AFFECTIONS. Help me, O gentle Jesus to be amongst the number of those of whom Thou

(1) II *Corin.*, x, 1. — (2) *Isaias*, xi, 2.

didst say : *Blessed are the meek... the peacemakers... for they shall possess the land... they shall be called the children of God* (1).

RESOLUTIONS. To undertake to imitate those who are distinguished by their gentleness and goodness.

POINT II. — THE MODESTY OF JESUS.

CONSIDERATIONS. Modesty, which the Apostle mentions in the second place, is like gentleness in that it charms and attracts hearts ; it is distinguished from it in that by regulating our conduct, it is most edifying, and gives greater lustre to all other virtues. The modesty of Jesus at every period of His holy life was more than angelic : it was Divine. Consequently it may be said that He charmed all hearts by His modesty in His look and in His words, in all His movements, as well as in His relations with others, in the simplicity and consistency of His exterior life : *He shall not be sad nor troublesome* (2) said the prophet Isaias.

APPLICATIONS. See how far you are like this living example of modesty. Do your words breathe humility, self-forgetfulness, moderation, discretion, the desire to edify others, to glorify God ? Or rather does not vanity, the desire to please, presumption, and levity appear in them ? In your look, your walk, your bearing and your actions, outside and in the house, is the truly modest Christian man to be seen, or the vain worldly man who seeks himself in everything ?

AFFECTIONS. Ardently desire to see this pre-

(1) Matt., v, 4-9. — (2) *Isaias*, XLII, 4.

cept of the Apostle fulfilled in your self : *Let your modesty be known to all men* (1).

RESOLUTIONS. Carefully to avoid any immodesty in dress, manners and speech.

POINT III. — THE PIETY OF JESUS.

CONSIDERATIONS. Filial piety, that feeling of tenderness and devotion so natural in the heart of a child towards his parents, is the third virtue specially attributed by the Holy Spirit to Jesus during His retirement in Nazareth, *The spirit of godliness... shall rest upon him* (2). Jesus had no need of prayer and contemplation as we have, to raise Himself to God His Father, and nevertheless, how indefatigable He was in regard to prayer! Truly, if in His active life He consecrated whole nights to it : *He passed the whole night in the prayer of God* (3) says St. Luke we are justified in believing that He gave the greater part of the time of His hidden life to it.

APPLICATIONS. We who do not see God our Father can only know Him, and awaken and preserve tender and true filial piety in our hearts by raising ourselves to Him in spirit by prayer, contemplation, and other spiritual exercises. Therefore we should value our religious duties very highly and perform them with great care. Do we do so?

COLLOQUY. With the admirable St. Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch, and martyr, whose feast is celebrated to-day.

(1) *Philipp.*, iv, 5. — (2) *Isaias*, xi, 2. — (3) *Luke*, vi, 12.

FEBRUARY 2nd.

THE FEAST OF THE PURIFICATION,
OR CANDLEMAS.

I. *Prelude.* See Mary in the temple offering the Child Jesus to the Lord; and Jesus offering Himself by the hand of Mary.

II. *Prelude.* Ask for the spirit of generosity and sacrifice.

POINT I. — WHAT DID MARY DO FOR US ON THIS DAY?

CONSIDERATIONS. Mary has given us a wonderful example of humility and obedience by submitting without being obliged to do so, to the law of the Purification, and by consenting thus to be regarded by her contemporaries as an ordinary woman. But that which gives her an infinitely greater right to our admiration and love is that to-day she made the most heroic sacrifice imaginable, by offering to God the Father the sole object of her love, her Jesus, to be the expiatory victim for our sins, the price of our redemption. Certainly she gave like other mothers, five sickels for the redemption of her Divine Child, and He was returned to her. But why was He returned to her? So that she might tend Him and care for Him, as a Victim destined for sacrifice.

APPLICATIONS. What a scene is laid before our eyes! The love of God's glory and of the salvation of souls triumphing in Mary over maternal love and tenderness! Alas! how far we are from a similar self-sacrifice; from such a burn-

ing love for God and our neighbour; we who think more of own interests than of the interest of God's glory and of the souls perhaps confided specially to our care; we who avoid with innumerable pretexts, the fulfilment of our duties, and such easy sacrifices! Let us endeavour to forget ourselves; to rise above ourselves in order to become more worthy of our Mother.

AFFECTIONS. Earnestly ask Mary to obtain for you a spirit of generosity and sacrifice.

RESOLUTIONS. Like Mary, to impose some sacrifice on myself to-day which is hard to nature, but pleasing to God.

POINT II. — WHAT DID JESUS DO FOR US ON THIS DAY ?

CONSIDERATIONS. Jesus, a little Infant forty days old, but with full use of His reason, offers Himself to His heavenly Father by the hands of Mary, to be the ransom of the human race oppressed by the yoke of the devil; to be the atoning sacrifice for the outrages against God committed by sin; to be, by the shedding of His blood, the universal Victim of expiation. God the Father accepted that offer which alone was worthy of Him; and from that day Jesus began His long martyrdom of thirty-three years which only ended with His last sigh on the cross.

APPLICATIONS. From the manger to Calvary, the life of our Divine Saviour and Model was a continual immolation of self for the glory of His heavenly Father and for the sanctification of your soul; it was a life of nothing but sacrifices which He completed by the sacrifice of Himself. This is the standard for the life of the

perfect Christian. Not satisfied with fulfilling all his duties faithfully, he devotes himself besides to works of zeal and charity; he gladly undergoes privations in order to be able to help the poor, destitute children or the helpless aged, to contribute towards adorning the sanctuary, and towards the propagation of the faith amongst the heathen; and it is not his money alone that he gives, but his personal service as well. He is to be found wherever there is some good to be done, tears to be dried, unfortunate people to be assisted, unhappy sheep to be brought back to the fold. Are you near, do you at least try to draw near to this perfection of Christian generosity?

AFFECTIONS. Ardent aspirations for this perfection.

RESOLUTIONS. Offer Jesus some generous resolutions in your Holy Communion to-day.

POINT III.—WHAT SHOULD WE DO FOR JESUS
AND MARY ON THIS DAY?

CONSIDERATIONS. We should correspond as far as is in us, to the love which Jesus and Mary have shown us. We too, should go to church, and present ourselves to Our Lord; and while the candles are blessed and offered, we should offer ourselves without reserve, on the altar of self-sacrifice which was raised by the hands of Jesus and Mary, with a longing to be consumed by the flames of Divine love.

APPLICATIONS. All the memories of this feast combine therefore in arousing our fervour; in imparting a fresh earnestness in God's service, in the fulfilment of duties and sacrifices which zeal for souls claims from you. The circum-

tances of a new month on which you are entering, is also a motive for stimulating your ardour. It is the second month of the year; try to enhance the good you have done during the first month, and make up in this way for what you neglected to do.

COLLOQUY. With the Blessed Virgin. - - Thank her for what she did for you on this day. — Beg her to offer you the heavenly Father as she offered Jesus, and to help you to carry out the good intentions which have suggested themselves to you during this meditation.

FEBRUARY 3rd.

ON THESE WORDS :

JESUS ADVANCED IN WISDOM AND AGE AND GRACE
WITH GOD AND MEN (1).

I. *Prelude.* Imagine the three persons of the Holy Family living together in the little home at Nazareth.

II. *Prelude.* Ask for the grace of an ardent desire to advance in the practice of perfection.

POINT I. — JESUS ADVANCED IN WISDOM WITH MEN.

CONSIDERATIONS. *Jesus advanced in wisdom*, that is to say that as He grew older, He gave signs of greater wisdom, and of greater perfection in all His actions. In the eyes of men, He merely seemed to make ordinary progress such as is made by men whose intellectual development depends on age and experience; but in Jesus Christ *are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge* (2), from the moment of His

(1) Luke, ii, 52. — (2) Coloss., ii, 3.

Incarnation. He therefore advanced in perfection and Goodness with constant progress, ever edifying and attracting all who saw Him more and more.

APPLICATIONS. How much to be envied are those Christians who, by following in the footsteps of their Divine model, ardently aspire to and happily attain their desire to become better as they advance in years! They edify all those with whom they live, they gladden the Heart of Jesus, they can be happy in the knowledge that they are fulfilling their principal duty, which is to aim at perfection. Am I amongst those who follow thus in the footsteps of my Divine model, or am I, on the contrary, amongst those waste their time with mere desires? — who remain stationary, or who fall away instead of advancing?

AFFECTIONS. In accordance with the testimony given me by my conscience at this moment.

RESOLUTIONS. Seeing the continual progress made by men in material things, I shall take the opportunity of rousing myself to make progress in virtue.

POINT II. — JESUS ADVANCED IN GRACE WITH GOD.

CONSIDERATIONS. *He advanced in grace... with God* (1). In what sense did Jesus advance in grace, He who was grace and holiness itself? In the sense that, in the eyes of men He practised acts of virtue which were ever greater, more arduous and more perfect in

(1) Luke, ii, 52.

their nature. The virtues He practised from the time of His infancy, He practised with a greater degree of perfection throughout His hidden life; with a yet higher degree during His public life; and in the last moments of His life they were all carried to the point of heroism. It is also said that Jesus advanced in grace *with God* to signify that the acts of virtue manifested by Him were such that they gained the esteem not only of men, but also and far more, of His heavenly Father, because they were acts of virtue sanctified by the purest intention and the most ardent love.

APPLICATIONS. Here I should ask myself two questions. First, do the acts of virtue I practise grow more perfect as I advance in age? — Are they more frequent and above all more generous, bearing testimony to greater victories gained over self? — Secondly, is the intention which accompanies my actions purer, more free from all self-love?

AFFECTIONS. I shall ask for grace to find the true answer to these two important questions, and to feel an ardent desire to attain to the degree of perfection to which I am called by grace.

RESOLUTIONS. I shall rouse myself with the thought of the results already obtained, and on the other hand, I shall count them as nought considering what yet remains to be done.

POINT III. — JESUS ADVANCED IN PERFECTION DURING AN OBSCURE LIFE.

CONSIDERATIONS. In what way did Jesus continually advance in perfection and merit?

As it is possible for us all : by leading an unostentatious life, by devoting ourselves to the occupations which usually fill the days of intimate family life. Meditate on the circumstances of the humble home at Nazareth ; that is all that you will see there. You will search in vain for conspicuous deeds capable of attracting the attention of the world which is too blind to see any greatness in simplicity.

APPLICATIONS. How instructive and encouraging everything is in the life of our Divine Model ! If He asks us all to grow, like Him, in perfection, before God and before men, He gives us in His own Person the proof that we can succeed in any circumstances and by the most ordinary actions of family or community life. When then should we not do it ? How much we shall regret some day not having done so ; having lost precious time ; having neglected what was to our greatest advantage.

COLLOQUY. With Jesus who invites and urges us by His example and by His words ever to make fresh progress in virtue. Ask that these words in particular coming from the Divine lips : *Be you therefore perfect, as also your heavenly Father is perfect* (1), may be always in your mind, as they were in the mind of St. Andrew Avellino who bound himself by vow to advance in the path of Christian perfection. (*Breviary* Nov. 10th.)

(1) Matt., v, 48.

FEBRUARY 4th. ASH WEDNESDAY LENT.

SERIES OF MEDITATIONS ON THE PASSION
OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST (1).

NOTE. As Ash Wednesday varies in date every year between February 4th. and March 10th. the number of meditations required until Ash Wednesday should be taken from the intercalar month placed at the end of this volume; having reached that day, the following meditation on the necessary dispositions for the holy time of Lent should be taken and those that follow until the Feast of the Sacred Heart inclusively. After that Feast, the meditations of the intercalar month which were not used before Ash Wednesday, can be continued. They will supply the necessary matter until July 1st. on which day the second volume and the second half-year begin. (See preface.)

(1) This series of meditations should naturally be found at the end of the life of Our Lord Jesus Christ. They are inserted here so that they may coincide with Lent, the most suitable time for meditation on the Passion. This reason seems sufficient for authorising the inversion of the chronological order which is generally followed by authors of a complete course of meditations on the life of Our Lord. At the end of the volume there will be found three meditations on fixed dates for the feasts of: 1° St. Joseph, March 19th; — 2° the Annunciation, March 25th; — 3° St. Louis Gonzaga, June 21st.

ASH WEDNESDAY.

THE NECESSARY DISPOSITIONS

FOR THE HOLY TIME OF LENT.

I. *Prelude.* Imagine Adam when he hears these humiliating words after his condemnation. *Dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return* (1).

II. *Prelude.* Ask God to inspire you with the feelings with which the Church desires to inspire all her children on this day.

POINT I. — THE FIRST DISPOSITION REQUIRED
ON THIS DAY : HUMILITY.

CONSIDERATIONS. Remember, o man, that *dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return*. Who uttered these seven words which re-echo throughout the Catholic universe to-day? God Himself about six thousand years ago. To whom did He address them? To Adam our first father, immediately after He has pronounced, as a punishment for his sin, the sentence of death on him and all his descendants. *Because thou hast eaten of the tree whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldst not eat, cursed is the earth in thy work,... in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread till thou return to the earth out of which thou wast taken : for dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return* (2). Why did God add these last words which do not aggravate the punishment already inflicted in any way? It was no doubt to humble Adam's pride and to fill his heart with profound humility, the principal condition for all salutary penitence. So we see that

(1) *Gen.*, III, 19. — (2) *Ibid.*, 17-19.

Adam, who began by excusing himself, does not say another word, but accepts the penance laid on him, and perseveres therein humbled, repentant and resigned for more than nine hundred years. God was pleased with that penance, it saved our first father by the merits of the future Redeemer.

APPLICATIONS. We sinned in Adam, we ourselves have sinned, we are very guilty; there is the greatest necessity for us to do penance and to implore pardon; and God is ready to grant it. But the first disposition He expects from the sinner's heart is humility, the conviction of his unworthiness. Therefore the first disposition that we should strive for and maintain during Lent, that time of penance laid on us all, is a profound humility based on the knowledge of our own nothingness and of our sins. This should give the chief merit to our works of penance.

AFFECTIONS. Ask for grace to know yourself well, and to acquire from the knowledge of your miseries, a profound humility which may go on increasing during these days of expiation.

RESOLUTIONS. To hear Mass and receive Holy Communion to-day if possible, with this intention.

POINT II. — THE SECOND DISPOSITION REQUIRED :
COMPUNCTION.

CONSIDERATIONS. Remember, o man that *dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return*. Who, every year on this day, echoes these same words which God uttered in the earthly paradise? Our mother, the holy Church through the voice of her ministers.

And to whom does she address them? To each one of us, to all the faithful who go to church. And at what moment? At the very moment when our foreheads are touched with the ashes, the emblem of death and penance. It is as though she said : O Man, whoever thou art, remember that because of the sin of thy first father thou must die and become like unto this dust : remember that if thou dost not do penance for thy sins after losing the grace of baptism, thou wilt but rise again from the dust of the tomb to pass, body and soul, into the place of eternal punishment.

APPLICATIONS. The Church only speaks to us in such grave and terrible language in order to inspire us from the first day in Lent, with holy and bitter compunction. Compunction of heart is the second essential disposition for these who desire to undertake one of the chief purposes of Lent : to perform salutary penance. If our works of mortification and penance are united to true contrition and humility of heart, God will accept them. He will forgive us ; He has pledged His word : *A contrite and humble heart, o God, Thou wilt not despise* (1) says the royal Prophet. But if these dispositions are wanting in us, should we not fear that all the practices of Lent, however difficult they may be will do us little good ?

AFFECTIONS. Earnestly ask God to give you a *contrite and humble heart* by using the words of the royal Prophet : *Feed us with the bread of tears : and give us for our drink tears in measure* (2).

(1) Ps., L, 19. — (2) Ps., LXXIX, 6.

RESOLUTIONS. To repeat the *Miserere* every day in Lent with as much humility and compunction if possible as the holy penitent King. — To receive the ashes to-day filled with the same feelings.

COLLOQUY. With holy king David. — Beg him to obtain for you the spirit of penance and compunction. With this intention say the psalm *Miserere* if time permits. *Have mercy upon me o God : according to thy great mercy* (1).

THURSDAY AFTER ASH WEDNESDAY.

THE ENTRY OF JESUS INTO THE GARDEN OF OLIVES.

I. *Prelude.* See Jesus among His Apostles, walking resolutely towards the Garden of Olives, there to begin His sorrowful Passion.

II. *Prelude.* Ask for grace to overcome with determination all the difficulties which are encountered in the service of God, and in practices of penance.

POINT I.

When Jesus had said these things, he went forth with his disciples over the brook Cedron where there was a garden, into which he entered with his disciples (2).

CONSIDERATIONS. Fix your eyes, O my soul, on your Lord whom you have so often taken as

(1) *Ps.*, L, 3.

(2) John, xviii, 1. — Observe that in the meditations on the Passion, the division of the three points is no longer announced except by the texts of the Gospel narrative. It is therefore very important to have them well impressed on the memory, especially as they usually contain the substance of the Points.

your model. See how resolutely He goes forward to the conflict and how He encourages His faithful disciples for the struggle by His example and words : *But that the world may know that I love the Father ; and as the Father hath given me commandment, so do I : Arise let us go hence* (1). Go where? To conflict, to death! How full of love, obedience and courage these words are!

APPLICATIONS. Do you see the heroism, the generosity of Jesus in this? How far are you from it, who instead of resolutely approaching opportunities for conflict and suffering, always take the greatest pains to avoid them on every occasion. Is there not great reason for you to be ashamed of this, you who profess to imitate Jesus Christ more perfectly than ordinary Christians, to fight under His standard and share with Him toil, privations and sufferings? Examine yourself with a sincere desire to know how far you deserve these reproaches.

AFFECTIONS. Admire the great Sacred Heart and heroic love of Jesus. Rouse yourself to be generous by His example. In trying circumstances say to yourself with St. Thomas the Apostle : *Let us also go, that we may die with him* (2).

RESOLUTIONS. I shall endeavour to-day to repair my past indolence and unfaithfulness.

POINT II.

Jesus came with them into a country place... and said to his disciples : Sit you here till I go yonder and pray (3).

CONSIDERATIONS. Observe how Jesus prepares for prayer : His example should serve as a les-

(1) John xiv, 31. — (2) John, xi, 16. — (3) Matt., xxvi, 36.

son to you. What does He do? He retires to a solitary place and leaves the company of men, even of His most intimate friends. He only invites them to watch and pray with him.

APPLICATIONS. O Jesus, how well dost Thou teach me what I should do in order to pray and meditate profitably on Thy holy law. Like Thee I must on entering the place intended for prayer, put away every irrelevant thought and distraction : *Sit you here till I go yonder and pray* ; afterwards I should by watchfulness, prevent their access to my mind and heart ; or at least prevent their taking possession of them.

AFFECTIONS. Earnestly ask for the spirit of prayer and the gift of contemplation : *Lord, teach us to pray* (1).

RESOLUTIONS. I desire to use, with more strength and constancy, the means by which the Apostle, and so many fervent Christians have reached a high standard of prayer.

POINT III.

And he taketh Peter and James and John with him, and he began to fear (2).

CONSIDERATIONS. Why does Our Lord grant such a glorious privilege to these three disciples, and desire them to be near Him at the moment when the great mysteries of His conflict and agony are to be fulfilled? The Gospel is silent, but we can imagine that as they participated in the glory and joys of Jesus on Mount Thabor He wished them also to participate in the humiliations and sorrows of His agony on the Mount of Olives.

(1) Luke, xi, 1. — (2) Mark, xiv, 33.

APPLICATIONS. How inconsistent we very often are? We realise, we envy the privilege Jesus showed to His three beloved disciples, by calling them to share the sorrows of His agony with Him, and we do not understand that He shows us the same favour when He gives us the opportunity to suffer for Him and with Him. Instead of being grateful for it, we complain and give way to despondency or rebellion. Is this acting with faith and reason? Renounce this inconsistency, and humbly ask our loving Saviour for grace to obtain, from the meditation of His sufferings, a love of the cross, contrition for our sins, compassion and resignation.

COLLOQUY. With St. Bridget, who spent all her life meditating on the sorrowful Passion of Jesus, and who received extraordinary graces and gifts in return.

FRIDAY AFTER ASH WEDNESDAY.

THE DISTRESS OF JESUS' SOUL.

I. *Prelude.* Listen to Jesus Christ saying to His disciples : *My soul is sorrowful unto death* (1).

II. *Prelude.* Ask for Christian resignation during interior trials.

POINT I.

He began to grow sorrowful and to be sad (2) :
... *to fear and to be heavy* (3).

CONSIDERATIONS. Man had sinned by abusing the faculties of his soul before he violated the senses and members of his body. Therefore Jesus wishes to begin the path of His Passion by agony of soul. These sorrows will be immense, greater than all created forces; He

(1) Matt., xxvi, 38. — (2) Ibid., 37. — (3) Mark, xiv, 33

will experience their bitterness to the full; no part of His soul will be free from them, because He desires to give to His heavenly Father full, superabundant satisfaction, and to us, the testimony of infinite love.

APPLICATIONS. From the very first steps which Jesus takes in the path of His sorrowful Passion, He unveils the love for men, for each one of us with which His heart is burning. For He is thinking of us all, and we can all say with the Apostle : *The Son of God loved me and delivered himself for me* (1). The executioners are not able to touch His soul; Jesus, to assist their impotence, miraculously holds in suspense the ineffable joys of the beatific vision which fill all the faculties of His soul, giving it over to the awful premonitory anguish of a cruel and violent death.

AFFECTIONS. Admiration and thanksgivings on considering a love so great and so little merited on the part of man.

RESOLUTIONS. To return love for love by trying to make use of all the faculties of our soul for the glory of God. — To see how it can be done to-day.

POINT II.

Then He saith to them : *My soul is sorrowful even unto death* (2).

CONSIDERATIONS. *My soul is sorrowful even unto death*, that is to say : even to being oppressed with the pain and anguish of those who struggle with death, or who are weighed down by the most overwhelming affliction of

(1) *Gal.*, II, 20. — (2) *Matt.*, XXVI, 38.

spirit. What has caused this heaviness, this sorrow of Jesus? In the first place, the repellent sight of the sins of men with which His Father had burdened Him from the time He offered Himself as the universal Victim of expiation. *The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all*, says the prophet Isaias (1). Then the vivid and detailed representation of all the torments, all the insults He had to undergo, and lastly, the heart-rending thought of the uselessness of His death for such a vast number of men who would persist in evil. *What profit is there is my blood* (2)?

APPLICATIONS. These then are the reasons, for the immense sorrows in your Saviour's soul. Examine them one by one and see to what extent you have yourself contributed to them during your life; and especially from the time that you declared that you would love and serve Him more perfectly.

AFFECTIONS. Compassion. — Repentance. — Gratitude.

RESOLUTIONS. I shall always try and especially to-day, not only to avoid grieving the Heart of my loving Saviour in any way, but also to give Him much consolation.

POINT III.

My soul is sorrowful even unto death: stay you here and watch with me (3).

CONSIDERATIONS. What does Jesus do during His extreme desolation of soul? First, He opens His heart to His three chosen disciples,

(1) *Isaias*, LIII, 6. — (2) *Ps.*, XXIX, 10. — (3) *Matt.* XXVI, 38.

and asks them to share His sorrow by watching and praying with Him; then He again has recourse to prayer. He acts in this way as Man, in order to serve as a model to us in everything.

APPLICATIONS. By this we learn what we may and what we should do in our spiritual trials. We may seek comfort by telling them to a good and discreet friend; but as men cannot, after all, give us the supernatural strength we require, we should have recourse to prayer, and hope for everything from God. Have you acted in this way? Have you not followed the example of those who stubbornly keep their difficulties and temptations to themselves at the risk of becoming despondent and melancholy? Or have you imitated those who, rushing to the opposite extreme, recount their interior difficulties indiscriminately to all, yet forget one thing; to have recourse to God by prayer, and to those whom He has given us as guides in spiritual matters, who should give advice and comfort?

COLLOQUY. With Jesus suffering so acutely in soul on my account. In accordance with the devout inspirations you must have experienced during this meditation.

SATURDAY AFTER ASH WEDNESDAY.

THE PRAYER OF JESUS IN THE GARDEN OF OLIVES.

I. *Prelude.* See your Divine Saviour prostrate with His face to the ground, addressing a humble and fervent prayer to His Father.

H. *Prelude.* Ash Him for grace to be always faithful to the conditions which constitute a good prayer.

POINT I.

And going a little further, he fell upon his face, praying (1).

CONSIDERATIONS. Observe the extraordinary signs of respect and humility with which Jesus Christ accompanies the prayer which He addresses to His heavenly Father. He kneels down, He bows His face to the ground and remains thus prostrate as though He were unworthy to raise His eyes to heaven. Ah! it is that, as Man and as a sinner burdened with our iniquities, He is permeated with the thought of the infinite majesty of Him with Whom He speaks. Then observe the remarkable feelings of filial piety expressed in these words : *My Father, if it be possible, let this chalice pass from me (2).*

APPLICATIONS. Why is it that we are often disrespectful and sometimes even irreverent when we pray or meditate? Is it not because we do not think enough of the infinite majesty of God, and of our absolute unworthiness? Happy the man therefore, who, before beginning to pray, is in the habit of asking himself : Before whom am I going to appear and why? His conduct will be always respectful. And as the body influences the soul very greatly, this humble and devout exterior will most effectually contribute toward interior devotion and will aid in preventing the distractions of our minds. Is this not what we all have frequently experienced?

AFFECTIONS. Accuse yourself before God for your want of lively faith and generosity during prayer and divine service.

(1) Matt., xxvi, 39. — (2) Ibid.

RESOLUTIONS. To amend, during this meditation and from this moment, the faults of the past.

POINT II.

My Father, if it be possible, let this chalice pass from me, Nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt (1).

CONSIDERATIONS. Here Jesus gives us an example of marvellous and heroic resignation. Like us in all things according to His human nature, He experienced acute horror at the thought of death and the terrible torments and painful humiliations which were to precede it. He beseeches, He implores His heavenly Father with tears and groans to spare Him these terrible sacrifices. And nevertheless He declares that He is ready to submit to them, if such be His Father's will; and indeed He did submit with entire and perfect resignation.

APPLICATIONS. This is the way we ought to pray when we ask God to spare or deliver us from what is repugnant to our feelings, to our natural inclination. We are not prohibited from earnestly beseeching Him to remove *this chalice* of bitterness from us, these sufferings and annoyances which are so repugnant to nature; but we should always declare that we desire above all, that His holy Will may be done perfectly in us, as every day we ask it in these words : *Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.*

AFFECTIONS. An offering of our whole being. A desire to fulfil always and with our whole heart, the most holy, most just, and most adorable Will of God.

(1) Matt., xxvi, 39.

RESOLUTIONS. I shall acquire the habit of seeing the hand of Divine Providence in everything.

POINT III.

He prayed the third time, saying the self-same word (1)

CONSIDERATIONS. Jesus interrupts His prayer three times in order to watch over His disciples who are indulging in a false security at the moment of greatest danger; but immediately afterwards, He returns to prayer, and repeats the same petition, each time with renewed fervour. *My father, if this chalice may not pass away, but I must drink it, thy will be done (2).*

APPLICATIONS. Two things are taught us here: First, that we should not so devote ourselves to prayer that we neglect good works nor should we be so much occupied with these works that we neglect prayer; but that zeal should be sanctified by prayer, and prayer ennobled by works of zeal and charity. Secondly, that we should not make the efficacy of prayer consist in a variety of formulas and expressions, nor should we dislike the repetition of one prayer.

COLLOQUY. With God the Father, Who condemns His beloved Son to such anguish and suffering for my sins (3).

(1) Matt., xxvi., 44. — (2) Matt., xxvi., 42.

(3) These expressions: for *my* sins, for *me*, for love of *me* are particularly well-suited to inflame our hearts with love for the Person of our Divine Redeemer, and to make us form generous resolutions. Therefore let us often use them; they are moreover in accordance with the truth. Jesus as God, for whom there is neither past nor future, in whom all live and die, had each one of us in his mind throughout the course of His Passion. He suffered, He sa-

First Week in Lent.

SUNDAY.

THE AGONY OF JESUS

IN THE GARDEN OF OLIVES.

I. *Prelude.* See Jesus prostrated with His face to the ground, in an agony, bathed in His Blood.

II. *Prelude.* Ask for courage and perseverance in spiritual trials.

POINT I.

And being in an agony... his sweat became as drops of blood trickling down upon the ground (1).

CONSIDERATIONS. The death of Our Saviour, presented to the world as a spectacle from the summit of Calvary, was to be a manifest proof of His Divinity. In reality it was. *The centurion*, says St. Mark,... *seeing that crying out in this manner he had given up the ghost, said : Indeed this man was the son of God (2).* All the soldiers who were there to guard Jesus said the same (3). Therefore His death need not have been preceded by that agony, which is the most manifest proof of the impotence of man, struggling in vain against his dissolution, yet Jesus, desirous of submitting to all our humiliations and all our own anguish, anticipated the time of His agony, and suffered it before His other torments. How hard and cruel it must

crificed Himself for each one of us as if we were alone in the world. *Who loved me*, says St. Paul, *and delivered himself for me.* We have the same right as he to say it. (*Gal.*, ii, 20.)

(1) Luke, xxii, 44. — (2) Mark., xv, 39. — (3) Matt., xxvii, 54.

have been since it was the effect, not of physical exhaustion, but of an interior conflict between the inclination and the will.

APPLICATIONS. What a proof of love, and what a useful lesson is given us here again by Jesus! To allay the bitterness of death for us, and to enable us to merit the grace to bear it with patience and resignation. He voluntarily endured and offered the anguish of the most cruel agony that ever was, to His heavenly Father for us. Have I realised this love? — what effect has it produced in me?

AFFECTIONS. Accept humbly from now, the sentence of death and the pains of your agony in atonement for your sins and your negligence in God's service.

RESOLUTIONS. To be more generous and faithful in spiritual conflicts and heavy trials.

POINT II.

And his sweat became as drops of blood, trickling down upon the ground (1).

CONSIDERATIONS. This sweat of blood, of which very rare instances are recorded, gives us some idea of what took place in the soul of Jesus during His cruel agony of nearly two hours; it shows us how violent was the conflict which took place in His soul between the natural repugnance to the chalice of bitterness, and the will that vigorously resisted the opposition of nature.

APPLICATIONS. Our Lord could, no doubt, have avoided such a bitter, humiliating agony

(1) Luke, xxii, 44.

as this; but He wished to suffer it so that it might serve as an example and encouragement. Let us then learn not to shrink from fulfilling any duty, however difficult it may be; and if we can only fulfil it with great repugnance and against our wills, let us console ourselves with the thought that these natural repugnances do not in the least detract, but rather add to the merit of whatever we do or suffer for the love of God. Jesus Himself shows us this. How encouraging this is!

AFFECTIONS. Reverence, adore Jesus Christ weeping tears of blood for you from all His body, as St. Bernard expresses it. Thank Him for His desire to suffer all the effects of human weakness in order to encourage and strengthen us.

RESOLUTIONS. In the hard trials I may have to bear, I shall strengthen myself with these words of the Apostle: *You have not yet resisted unto blood* (1).

POINT III.

*And there appeared to him an angel from heaven,
strengthening him* (2).

CONSIDERATIONS. The humble supplications of Jesus in His agony have not been in vain. He receives the visit of an angel who strengthens His Body by restoring the vigour lost through the agony; who strengthens His Soul by commending His resignation, by showing Him how much glory would be gained for His Father, and how much happiness for the human race, by His Passion. That which Jesus

(1) *Hebrews*, xii, 4. — (2) *Luke*, xxii, 43.

asked for as Man, conditionally, was not granted Him, it is true; but nevertheless His prayer obtained a great and consoling answer.

APPLICATIONS. That is the fruit that you too will not fail to obtain when you have recourse to God in your trials and your anguish. We never pray in vain. If it be not granted you to be relieved of a cross, the weight of which oppresses you, the angel of Divine consolation will pour the unction of grace on your soul; you will feel new strength and vigour of soul rising within you, and your cross will appear light to you. You will carry it with sweet resignation, sometimes with grateful joy, and ever with increasing merit. You will obtain more than you had asked for.

COLLOQUY. With Jesus in His agony, sweating blood, for love of me.

MONDAY.

THE NECESSITY AND MANNER OF DOING PENANCE, ESPECIALLY DURING LENT.

I. *Prelude.* Hear Jesus saying these words : *Unless you shall do penance, you shall likewise perish* (1).

II. *Prelude.* Ask for the spirit of penance united to deep feelings of humility and compunction.

POINT I. — GOD COMMANDS US TO DO PENANCE.

CONSIDERATIONS. The commandment to do penance given us by God is positive, universal, comminatory. He does not say : Unless you shall do penance perhaps, or probably you

(1) Luke, xiii, 3.

shall all perish, but simply : *you shall all perish* (1). And why shall we perish? Because we are sinners, and after the loss of baptismal innocence, no other road to heaven is open except that of penance. Why again? Because the flesh wars against the spirit and drives us incessantly into sin; consequently St. Paul says, *If you live according to the flesh, you shall die. But if by the spirit you mortify the deeds of the flesh, you shall live* (2).

APPLICATIONS. We must therefore do penance, and penance proportioned to the number and gravity of our sins, says the Council of Trent. We must do it always, but especially during the holy season of Lent; and all of us, whatever may be our age or our strength, can do penance in some way or other. The Fathers of the desert, those truly penitent men, made it consist chiefly in fasting, vigils and austerities. We shall see in the three points of this meditation how we can practise these three kinds of penance. First, as regards fasting, if you cannot observe it strictly you can partially observe it; you can curtail your usual fare by limiting yourself prudently to what is absolutely necessary; you can mortify inclination and pleasure in eating and drinking by depriving yourself habitually of such things as delicacies and dessert. Consider before God what you can and are willing to do during these days of penance, and be faithful to whatsoever you undertake to do.

AFFECTIONS. Humble yourself with the thought that your fasting will never be any-

(1) Luke, xiii, 3. — (2) Rom., viii, 13.

thing but trifling in comparison with the fasting of Divine Lord.

RESOLUTIONS. Do not heed any pretexts whatever for breaking your resolutions as regards the different ways in which you can make up for severe fasting, if you are dispensed from observing it.

POINT II. — OUR VOCATION MAKES PENANCE AN OBLIGATION.

CONSIDERATIONS. By virtue of the invitation, or rather the precept of Jesus Christ, for He spoke to all when He said : *Be ye perfect as your Father in heaven is perfect* (1), it is your duty to aspire to perfection by opposing your natural inclinations unceasingly, by doing violence to yourself, by abstaining, all of which clearly implies a spirit of sacrifice and mortification or an uninterrupted penance.

APPLICATIONS. The penitents of the desert added vigils and rough work to their fasting. If you may not, cannot curtail your sleep to go and watch, and chant psalms in the sanctuary like them, and like a great many religious even in our day, learn at least how to rise promptly at the time you decide to rise, whatever may be your natural reluctance; know at least how to watch during your morning or evening prayers, during your meditation and during all your devotions by never giving way to drowsiness or spiritual languor. At times the struggle will be very hard.

AFFECTIONS. Offer your self to the Lord as a living victim continually immolated on the altar of His love.

(1) Matt., v, 48.

RESOLUTIONS. I shall be constant in my determination of rising not only with promptness, but also with great eagerness, by shaking off my languor and by rousing myself with ardent aspirations to generosity in God's service.

POINT III. — OUR INTEREST MAKE PENANCE AN OBLIGATION.

CONSIDERATIONS. It is of faith that whatever we have not expiated in this world by penance, must be expiated rigorously by purgatorial fire; hence the saying of St. Augustine : Either do penance or burn. We must choose. Can you hesitate without disregarding your closest interests? If you do you would be wholly blind and your own enemy; all the more so since you have so many fruitful ways of doing penance and of paying your debts.

APPLICATIONS. Indeed, besides the means already indicated, can you not imitate, at least in a small measure, the corporal mortifications of the Fathers in the desert by a continual mortification of your senses and of your body? Always, or at least during part of your prayers or the Holy Mass, to kneel or sit without seeking a comfortable support; to pass through streets and public places without satisfying your vain curiosity; and to observe the points of the rules you have imposed on yourself with great strictness and constancy. This is a difficult penance; it means living in the practice of continual self-sacrifice.

COLLOQUY. With Jesus Christ, the perfect model of penance, in accordance with the affections and resolutions of the three Points of this meditation.

TUESDAY.

JESUS REJOINS HIS DISCIPLES.

HE GOES FORTH TO MEET THE TRAITOR JUDAS.

I. *Prelude.* Imagine Jesus at the moment He said these words : *Sleep ye now... he that will betray me is at hand* (1).

II. *Prelude.* Let us ask for grace to obtain much fruit from this meditation.

POINT I

He cometh to his disciples and findeth them asleep, and he saith to Peter : What ? Could you not watch one hour with me (2) ?

CONSIDERATIONS. This reproach confounded the three Apostles so greatly that *they knew not what to answer him*, says the Evangelist (3). It must have been particularly bitter and painful to St. Peter who shortly before had surpassed the others by his protestations of fidelity and constancy. For this reason our Divine Lord addressed him personally : *Simon, sleepest thou* (4) ? What, whilst I your Master, have prayed and endured an agony for you, you have not the strength of will to watch in prayer with Me one hour, though your enemies are about to assail you, and though I expressly commanded you to do so ? Truly the reproach was well merited.

APPLICATIONS. How many times have you merited the same reproach, you who frequently give way to languor and drowsiness during your

(1) Mark, xiv, 41-42. — (2) Matt., xxvi, 40. — (3) Mark, xiv, 40. — (4) Ibid., 37.

spiritual duties, and especially during mental prayer? This precious time is granted you to foresee and prepare for whatsoever the glory of your Divine Master and your greatest interests will demand from you during the day.

AFFECTIONS. Humble yourself before God. — Repent. — Rouse yourself to be more diligent and persevering.

RESOLUTIONS. When I am tempted during my prayers, meditations or spiritual reading, to give way to drowsiness or indolence, I shall think of the reproach spoken to St. Peter : *Simon, sleepest thou?* The remembrance of this alone will rouse me.

POINT II.

Watch ye, and pray that you enter not into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak (1).

CONSIDERATIONS. Spiritual lukewarmness maintained by a confidence which creates a certain inactive desire to do good accompanied by ineffectual suggestions, is a dangerous state. Those who give way to it are kept in the toils of fatal delusions. Solely because they usually desire to do good, and like the Apostles, are lavish with devout protestations, they think all is well, and therefore fall asleep in a false security, as though there were no great difference between the will and the deed, and as though we of ourselves had the power to work out our salvation. This is what Jesus gives us to understand when He says : *The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak*. He also says these grave words : *Watch ye and pray* (2).

(1) Mark, xiv, 38. — (2) Ibid.

It is as though He said : Always be on your guard, always be distrustful of self, always be armed with prayer; if not, you will certainly succumb, to temptation, to the treacherous assaults of your enemies.

APPLICATIONS. Examine yourself carefully here. See if you have deluded yourself regarding your state; a delusion which is the more dangerous, because an abuse or negligence which has become a habit ends by being unheeded and fails to cause any uneasiness.

AFFECTIONS. Ask that you may know yourself thoroughly. — Thank God for having found a wise director who assists you so greatly by his zeal and counsel.

RESOLUTIONS. Sometimes to ask myself if I do not resemble those Christians who think they possess virtue solely because they esteem and love it, or because they often impress others with it.

POINT III.

And going away again, he prayed ... and when he returned... saith to them : Sleep ye now and take your rest... the hour is come : behold the son of man shall be betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise up, let us go. Behold, he that will betray me is at hand (1).

CONSIDERATIONS. The courage with which Jesus Christ now goes to meet suffering and death, the thought alone of which had stricken Him with agony, clearly shows us the powerful effect of prayer, of that long and fervent prayer which He had addressed to His Father. In the shameful flight of His Apostles in the moment of danger on the other hand, we see

(1) Mark, xiv, 30-42.

the void left in the soul through neglecting to have recourse to God by fervent prayer.

APPLICATIONS. Therefore it is through our prayers and our intercourse with God that we obtain the strength that we require at difficult times. If we took care to foresee these occasions during our morning prayers and meditation and roused ourselves to meet them by humbly imploring the assistance of grace, courage would never fail us. At the critical moment we should say with Jesus : *Behold the hour is come, let us go*, let us put into practice the resolutions we made under the inspiration of grace. Our victories would be as many as our trials.

COLLOQUY. With our Divine Saviour. The affections and resolutions indicated in the preceding Points will always supply ample matter for the Colloquies. They can also be made profitably with the saint whose feast is being celebrated, or with the one for whom we feel most devotion.

WEDNESDAY.

THE BETRAYAL BY JUDAS.

- I. *Prelude*. Imagine the traitor Judas giving Jesus a kiss.
 II. *Prelude*. Ask God for salutary fear and a great distrust of self.

POINT I.

« *As he yet spoke, behold Judas, one of the twelve, came and with him a great multitude with swords and clubs (1).* »

CONSIDERATIONS. To-day we must meditate on a profound and terrible mystery of pervers-

(1) Matt., xxvi, 47.

sion. Judas, one of the twelve chosen disciples of Jesus, instructed by Him for nearly three years, confirmed in the faith by so many miracles, overwhelmed with so many favours, has become the instrument of those who plan the death of Jesus... He sold Him to them for thirty sicles of silver (1). He comes to deliver Him treacherously into their hands. Alas! this then is the abyss of blindness and perversity into which Judas has been unconsciously led through avarice. This is where we should exclaim with David who realised his own frailty : *Quid est homo? What is man* (2)?

APPLICATIONS. May the misfortunes of others be a warning to you. See if there are not certain passions in you which have never been conquered or which, after having been repressed, have little by little regained their original power. One alone is sufficient to overcome the virtue of him who appeared perfectly reliable. The history of the Church and of the religious orders has had to record many defections and apostasies which have originated in a single passion which has been imperfectly repressed.

AFFECTIONS. Let us ask God to enlighten us : *Lord, that I may see* (3), that I may know the passion I should most fear in the future.

(1) The details of this infamous compact are related by the Evangelist St. Matthew in these words : *Then (the eve of Holy Thursday) went one of the twelve who was called Judas Iscariot, to the chief priests and said to them : What will you give me, and I will betray him unto you? But they appointed him thirty pieces of silver.* (Chap. xxvi, 14-15.) The silver sicle (there were gold ones also) was equivalent to about three shillings of the present day. The price of the betrayal did not amount to £ 4.

(2) *Ps.*, viii, 5. — (3) *Luke*, xviii, 41.

RESOLUTIONS. Not to rest a moment until we have completely conquered our ruling passion.

POINT II.

*And forthwith coming to Jesus he said : Hail Rabbi.
And he kissed him (1).*

CONSIDERATIONS. What revolting hypocrisy! Under the appearance of the most respectful affection, Judas hides the blackest treachery; by a kiss he indicates and delivers his Divine Master to the fury of His enemies. Does he then think he can deceive God, as man can be deceived? Oh! how passion blinds its victims!

APPLICATIONS. There is no one who does not abhor the crime of Judas. But are there not some Christians in our day who repeat it by sacrilegious Communion, when with the appearance of piety, they deliver Jesus, as far as it is possible, to the demons which govern their hearts? May God preserve us forever from such a crime! But there are actions of less revolting hypocrisy which we should nevertheless fear and abhor: to be satisfied with the appearances of virtue and devotion; to be more careful in matters of observance in the presence of men than in their absence, to allege false pretexts to obtain our ends; to disparage ourselves in order to gain praise, etc.: is not this hypocrisy? Is this not using dissimulation? Have we nothing with which to reproach ourselves regarding this?

AFFECTIONS. Abhor the crime of Judas. — Sympathise with Jesus on account of all the humiliation and sorrow He must have felt.

(1) Matt., XXXI, 49.

RESOLUTIONS. To declare that our desire is ever to walk with simplicity and uprightness of heart and to aspire to true virtue, ever having God as witness to our intentions.

POINT III.

*And Jesus said to him : Friend, whereto art thou come (1)?
Judas, dost thou betray the son of man with a kiss (2)?*

CONSIDERATIONS. What is more wonderful here, the goodness and ineffable gentleness of Jesus, or the hardness of Judas' heart? *Friend*, by giving the treacherous Apostle this name, Jesus intimates that He is still ready to pardon him; and by asking him : *Whereto art thou come?* He helps him to understand, to recognise and abhor his crime. But Judas remains unmoved. Our Divine Lord makes a last effort to convert him : He shows him that He knows of his treason and tries to make him realise the horror of it by these words : *Judas, dost thou betray the Son of man by a kiss?* But it is all in vain, Judas remain obstinate in his crime.

APPLICATIONS. The ineffable goodness of Jesus should increase your love for Him : and the inconceivable obduracy of the traitor Judas should fill you with salutary fear and extreme distrust of self, notwithstanding the number of years you have devoted to the service of God nor the degree of virtue you think you have acquired. Ask that such may be the fruit of this meditation.

COLLOQUY. With our loving Saviour, by dwelling chiefly on the affections and resolutions recommended in the first two Points.

(1) Matt., xxvi. 50. — (2) Luke, xxii, 48.

THURSDAY.

THE ARREST OF JESUS. — THE FLIGHT OF THE APOSTLES.

I. *Prelude.* See the soldiers who came to take Jesus, falling back, and the Apostles cowardly taking to flight.

II. *Prelude.* Ask for grace to live forever united to Jesus Christ by bonds of love.

POINT I.

Jesus therefore knowing all things that should come upon him, went forth and said to them : Whom seek ye ? They answered him : Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus saith to them : I am he... they went backward and fell to the ground... If therefore you seek me, let these go their way... Then Simon Peter having a sword, drew it ; and struck the servant of the high-priest, and cut off his right ear. And the name of the servant was Malchus (1). But Jesus... when he had touched his ear, he healed him (2).

CONSIDERATIONS. Why does Jesus thus multiply the proofs of His Divinity by conspicuous miracles at the very moment He is beginning His sorrowful Passion ? In order to show clearly that He has only been taken, bound and put to death because He willed it, as Isaias had predicted : *He was offered because it was his own will* (3). Without this, how could the martyrs have answered that insult of the tyrants : What madness to adore a God put to death by men ! And how would they have been able to convince them that this violent death was not the result of impotence but of the love of Jesus for mankind ?

(1) John, xviii, 4 10. — (2) Luke, xxii, 51. — (3) *Isaius*, lxi, 7.

APPLICATIONS. This thought should enable us to know and appreciate God's merciful love towards men. If He compels them humbly to believe incomprehensible mysteries on His word, He helps them to believe, not only by His grace, but also by the testimony of miraculous occurrences which appeal to the senses and which He is ready to repeat as often as they are needed by circumstances.

AFFECTIONS. Praise and thanksgiving to the Lord our God who delivered Himself up to death for us, and who asks for nothing in return from His creature but what is in accordance with sound reason.

RESOLUTIONS. To strive to grow unceasingly in the love of God who is so good and merciful towards us.

POINT II.

Then they took Jesus and bound him (1).

CONSIDERATIONS. Consider the terrible blindness of the Jews. In spite of the wonderful miracles of goodness and power which they have just witnessed, they persist in carrying out their criminal plans; they dare to lay hands on Jesus. And because He gives Himself into their hands they think they have conquered. Alas! even miracles are incapable of converting men of passion — the proof is here. Passion blinds a man, and stifles the cry of reason and conscience. See, on the other hand, the gentleness of Jesus. He allows Himself to be taken, bound, loaded with chains, pushed here and there, and grossly insulted along the entire road from the

(1) John, xviii, 12.

Garden of Gethsemane to the city of Jerusalem.

APPLICATIONS. The chains of original sin and of our own sins held us captive under the yoke of the devil. Neither men nor angels had the power to break these chains. Jesus Christ alone could do it, and His love for us constrained Him to do it. He allowed Himself to be loaded with our chains in order to give us back the liberty of the sons of God. Do you often think of this love and favour? — Does the thought of it provoke in your heart those feelings of tenderness and love which caused the tears of the Saints? Fear to be unfeeling and ungrateful.

AFFECTIONS. Reverence — gratitude. A desire to be closely united to our Lord by bonds of the most tender love.

RESOLUTIONS. To prevent, by incessant watchfulness over ourselves, any inordinate affection obscuring our intelligence or hardening our heart.

POINT III.

Then the disciples all leaving him, fled (1).

CONSIDERATIONS. This then was the end of the promises and vigorous protestations of the Apostles. They had all assured their beloved Master that they were determined never to leave Him, that they would go with Him *into prison and to death* (2). But what happened? The moment they saw Him in the power of the soldiers, all of them, without exception, abandoned Him shamefully and sought safety in flight. Thus the prophecy of Jesus was verified: *All of you*

(1) Matt., xxvi., 56. — (2) Luke, xxii., 33.

shall be scandalized in me this night (1). Because I shall allow Myself to be bound and dragged into prison, you will lose faith in My Divinity and My Omnipotence, and you will leave Me; *For it is written : I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be dispersed* (2). This then was the fatal consequence of the presumption of the Apostles and of their negligence in fortifying themselves by prayer before the conflict, as our Divine Lord had so earnestly recommended.

APPLICATIONS. We condemn the inconstancy and cowardice of the Apostles ; we blame them bitterly for grieving the Heart of our loving Saviour so cruelly by their desertion and flight. But are we not condemning ourselves, we who have been so inconstant and cowardly in following Jesus? We who are so seldom faithful to our promises and our resolutions because, like the Apostles, we are not sufficiently distrustful of ourselves, and are too little given to prayer?

COLLOQUY. With St. Peter, who preserved throughout his life the most profound humility and entire distrust of self by the remembrance of his cowardice. Ask for these same feelings.

FRIDAY.

JESUS LED FROM THE HOUSE OF ANNAS

TO THE TRIBUNAL OF CAIPHAS.

I. *Prelude.* See Jesus amongst the soldiers, bound and led like a criminal to the city of Jerusalem.

II. *Prelude.* Ask for constancy and an ever increasing generosity in God's service.

(1) Matt., xxvi, 31. — (2) Matt., xxvi, 31.

POINT I.

And they led him away to Annas first (1). From there they led him to Caiphas the high-priest, where the scribes and the ancients were assembled (2).

CONSIDERATIONS. Here commences that long succession of sufferings and humiliations to which our Divine Lord resigned Himself so generously in the Garden of Olives, and which only ended with His life. All the streets, all the public squares, all the tribunals of Jerusalem will witness the state of impotence and subjection to which His enemies think they have reduced Him, because He offers no resistance, allows Himself to be led wherever they please and obeys all their commands. Amidst the shouts of the populace He will be dragged successively from Annas to Caiphas, from Caiphas to the Great Council, from the Council to Pilate; from Pilate to Herod; He will be brought back from there to Pilate's tribunal, and from thence to the Praetorium to be scourged, then to the platform as a spectacle to the people; and from there finally, He will be made to descend to the public square and to go to Cavalry burdened with His cross, obedient even unto death.

APPLICATIONS. Learn, from your Divine Master, to offer no resistance to the dispositions of Divine Providence : to bear up under all vicissitudes and contrarieties however opposed, humiliating and hard to nature, if you are called upon to do so. Now and then the trials will be very hard, they will try your patience : they will bring temptations of discouragement,

(1) John, xviii, 13. — (2) Matt., xxvi, 57.

perhaps of despair. In these trying and decisive moments keep your eyes fixed on Jesus, and you will be encouraged and strengthened.

AFFECTIONS. *Do with me, Lord, as Thou wilt, because I know that Thou lovest me* (1).

RESOLUTIONS. To see the dispositions of Providence in all the vicissitudes of life. — To accept them willingly. — To suppress when necessary, the repugnances of nature.

POINT II.

The high priest therefore asked Jesus of his disciples, and of his doctrine. Jesus answered him : I have spoken openly to the world... Why askest thou me? Ask them who have heard what I have spoken unto them... (2).

CONSIDERATIONS. The High Priest's examination deals with two points : the disciples of Jesus, and His doctrine. Our Divine Lord leaves the first unanswered. Alas! how can he give a good testimony of His disciples? At that very moment one of them is denying Him, and the others remain in hiding for fear of sharing their Master's fate. He loves them too well to speak ill of them. He is silent. Jesus is content with appealing to the testimony of the public as to His doctrine, since the questions addressed to Him are only prompted by malice and by a secret desire to find some pretext for accusation and condemnation. He clearly shows in this way that He is aware of the guilty intentions of His judges, and that He has nothing to fear from a severe but just examination of all that He has said and taught.

APPLICATIONS. Here Our Divine Master

(1) St. Augustine. — (2) John, xviii, 19-21.

teaches us to be silent when we cannot speak well of our neighbour, unless we are bound by Christian charity to disclose some of his faults for his own sake or for the sake of those who would be exposed to any danger of perversion. He teaches us also to be cautious with our own words and reserved in conversation, especially in the presence of certain people, so that we may never fear a just criticism, but may, if necessary, be able to appeal to the testimony of those who have heard us.

AFFECTIONS. Ask for the grace, we might say the art, of knowing when to be silent, and when to speak opportunely.

RESOLUTIONS. To acquire the habit of prudence and circumspection in conversation in order not to fall into sins of speech which may be very fatal and irreparable in their consequences.

POINT III.

And when he said these things, one of the servants standing by, gave Jesus a blow, saying : Answerest thou the high priest so? Jesus answered him : If I have spoken evil, give testimony of the evil, but if well, why striketh thou me (1)?

CONSIDERATIONS. Realise, if possible, the insult which is offered here to Jesus, the King of heaven and earth. He is struck, the greatest affront a man can receive from his fellow-creature — before the whole tribunal — by the hand of a manservant and as a correction from a coarse man. He who is the Master of creatures, He who is infinite Wisdom! And how does He repay this cruel insolence? With an

(1) John, xviii, 22-23.

answer most wise, gentle and free from all resentment.

APPLICATIONS. Compare your conduct with that of your Divine Model. Are you patient and gentle, not in similar circumstances, for that is impossible, but in small injuries done to you, or that you think are done to you? And yet, who are you?

COLLOQUY. With our Divine Saviour. Sympathise with His humiliations. Offer to suffer any kind of insult and ill-treatment for love of Him.

SATURDAY.

JESUS ACCUSED AND QUESTIONED

AT THE TRIBUNAL OF CAIPHAS.

I. *Prelude.* See Jesus standing with His hands bound, before His iniquitous judges.

II. *Prelude.* Ask for solid virtue and above all for great purity of conscience.

POINT I.

And the chief Priests and the whole council sought false witness against Jesus that they might put him to death; and they found not (1).

CONSIDERATIONS. How great must have been the purity of Our Lord's life since His sworn enemies, even by calling a large number of witnesses, and, what is more, false witnesses, against Him, could find nothing that tarnished it, nothing that had the shadow of a single sin or fault.

APPLICATIONS. The life of a Christian who

(1) Matt., xxvi, 59-60,

professes to walk in the footsteps of his Divine Master should be so disciplined that the enemies of religion even by closely watching him, will not be able to find anything to blame in his words or actions, in his private or public life. Can you truthfully say yours is such a life? Perhaps you think it is; but if you knew what others think and say of you, and would say to you if they were not afraid of wounding your pride or your self-love, could you still continue to think so? Besides, even if men could not reproach you in any way, would that make you blameless in the sight of God who sees your heart, your motives and your intentions.

AFFECTIONS. I shall humble myself before God. O my Divine Model, what a contrast between Thee and me! How many sins I have committed! How many faults and negligences I am guilty of every day! Yet I only see a small portion of them. I implore Thy mercy with contrition, and trust in Thy infinite goodness.

RESOLUTIONS. I shall watch carefully over myself to-day so that I may not do anything unworthy before God or man.

POINT II.

And the high priest rising up, said to him : Answerest thou nothing to the things which these witness against thee ? But Jesus held his peace (1).

CONSIDERATIONS. Admire the silence of Jesus your Divine Master on this occasion. His honour, His reputation impugned before the whole tribunal, the imminent danger to which

(1) Matt., xxvi, 62-63.

His life is exposed, everything seems to indicate that it is His duty to defend and justify Himself; moreover it would be so very easy to make the justice of His cause triumph. No, He leaves the defence to His Father; He is silent.

APPLICATIONS. What a contrast here, too, between Master and disciple! The Master confronts the most lying imputations with profound silence; and I who pride myself on being His disciple, cannot bear the most deserved reproofs, nor the most charitable advice without defending and excusing myself, perhaps not altogether truthfully. Must I not acknowledge this?

AFFECTIONS. Gratitude to Jesus Christ for expiating my untruthful excuses and my pride by His silence.

RESOLUTIONS. I shall receive advice which is given me in humility, without seeking excuses. I shall receive words which wound my self-love, with silence and gentleness.

POINT III.

The high priest said to him : I adjure thee by the living God that thou tell us if thou be the Christ the Son of God. Jesus saith to him : Thou hast said (1) ... I am (2).

CONSIDERATIONS. Jesus teaches us an important lesson. So long as it is only a question regarding His own Person, He is silent; but when it concerns the glory of His heavenly Father, the salvation of souls, or the interests of the faith, He speaks and confesses the truth. And though He knows it will cost Him His

(1) Matt., xxvi, 63-64. — (2) Mark, xiv, 62.

life, He confesses it openly, unreservedly and without evasion.

APPLICATIONS. To know when to be silent and when to speak opportunely is a great art, it implies reflection, calmness of mind, and great strength of character. Have I not committed many indiscretions of speech, or sometimes perverted truth by dissimulation, a blameworthy silence, or by deliberate concealment through these qualities being wholly or partially wanting in me?

AFFECTIONS. O my God, how far I am yet from the liberty of Thy true children; from the sincerity and courage of the confession of the faith! But with the assistance of Thy holy grace I shall try to obtain them; help me.

RESOLUTIONS. To reflect before speaking. To banish every fear when religion, conscience or the salvation of others obliges you to speak, and to tell the truth, the whole truth.

COLLOQUY. With our loving Saviour. Ask Him for grace so to meditate on all the circumstances of His Passion that you may obtain abundant fruit from them.

Second Week in Lent.

SUNDAY.

JESUS CONDEMNED AS A BLASPHEMER.

I. *Prelude.* See Jesus so gentle and humble amidst blood-thirsty men who cry out . *He is guilty of death* (1).

II. *Prelude.* Ask for grace to know and love Jesus Christ more.

(1) Matt., xxvi, 66.

POINT I.

Then the high priest rent his garments, saying : He hath blasphemed : what further need have we of witnesses (1) ?

CONSIDERATIONS. Observe and abhor the hypocrisy of Caiphas and his adherents. Under the mask of piety and zeal, - they hide their deadly hatred towards Our Lord, and the scheme which had been determined on so long since, for ridding themselves of Him by death. But it was necessary for them to have a plausible pretext in order not to prejudice the people against themselves. Caiphas feels certain that he has found it by requesting Jesus to say whether He is in truth the Son of God. If He says no, he will condemn Him as an imposter, since he has passed Himself off as God before the people; if he says yes, he will condemn Him as a blasphemer, with every outward demonstration of the pain caused him by the offence against God. How crafty passion is in attaining its ends !

APPLICATIONS. Do I not also sometimes use dissimulation, though in a less serious matter? By deceiving people, hiding unworthy intentions under plausible appearances, or even by justifying in my own eyes, forbidden actions which I take pleasure in? But if it be God who is going to judge me, of what use is this to me? Or rather, how full of shame I shall be at my judgment.

AFFECTIONS. At the feet of Jesus, detest all pretence and hypocrisy even in small matters.

(1) Matt., xxvi, 65.

RESOLUTIONS. I shall often examine myself in the presence of God on the motives which direct my words and actions.

POINT II.

*Now you have heard the blasphemy; what think you?
But they, answering said: He is guilty of death (1).*

CONSIDERATIONS. By whom was this iniquitous sentence of death pronounced? Against whom? And why? By malicious men, by vindictive judges. Against the Saint of saints because He confessed the truth, thereby fulfilling a duty of perfect justice.

APPLICATIONS. How many times in the world is innocence calumniated and wronged by cunning! God permits this for the accomplishment of His secret designs, His purposes of goodness and mercy. This is what takes place in this instance: The Son of God made man desires to restore the glory of His Father, and to save men by sacrificing His life. Caiphas provides Him with the means. And the doors of eternal life are opened to all through this most iniquitous sentence of death.

AFFECTIONS. O unfathomable wisdom of Divine Providence! O ineffable Goodness of God towards men, above all towards me who have re-enacted the deicide crime of Caiphas by renewing sin, the true cause of Jesus' death.

RESOLUTIONS. I desire to live alone for Him who accepted death to give me life. I desire to abandon myself blindly always and in all things to the hands of Divine Providence.

(1) Matt., xxvi, 65-66.

POINT III.

But they answering said : He is guilty of death (1).

CONSIDERATIONS. If we regard Jesus as the new Adam, according to the Apostle's expression (2), who has taken upon Himself the sin of the first Adam, and the numberless sins of all his descendants in order to atone for them in His person, then certainly : *He is guilty of death*. It is in this sense that the Eternal Father sanctions the sentence delivered against His Son, and that He Himself accepts it in loving silence.

APPLICATIONS. O my soul, thou hast sinned in Adam, thou thyself hast sinned, therefore it is for thee that Jesus is going to suffer death. Yes, that sentence : *He is guilty of death* has been pronounced against thee by Divine justice and is to be carried out, — when behold, the Son of God made man, takes thy place, receives it instead of thee, and thus restores thee to eternal life.

AFFECTIONS. May I die for love of Thee, O my Jesus, who didst sacrifice Thyself for me.

RESOLUTIONS. I shall strive by means of continual mortification, to realise this desire proceeding from a heart burning with love. I shall take every opportunity of training myself to self-denial.

COLLOQUY. With the Holy Angels, witnesses of the horrible plots against Jesus in the courts where every justice should have been rendered to Him.

(1) Matt., xxvi, 66. — (2) Rom., v, 14.

MONDAY.

MOTIVES FOR PENANCE

SUGGESTED

BY THE THOUGHT OF EVIL CAUSED BY SIN.

I. *Prelude.* Hear St. Peter saying to the inhabitants of Jerusalem . *Be penitent therefore, and be converted that your sins may be blotted out* (1).

II. *Prelude.* Ask for firm resolution in order to conform to the Apostle's précept.

POINT I. — THE MULTIPLICITY OF OUR SINS.

CONSIDERATIONS. Go over all the years of your life in your mind : before and after your first Communion — before and after you entered the state of life you have chosen — the places you have lived in at different times — the sins you have committed in them. Then go quickly over the commandments of God and of the Church — the duties imposed on you by your baptismal vows, the duties of your state and you will be astonished and dismayed at the sight of the innumerable multitude of your sins and faults. And what if you saw them as God sees them ?

APPLICATIONS. Adam and all his descendants were deprived of the gifts of grace and condemned to death for a single mortal sin ; for a single venial sin Moses and Ezekiel, the greatest friends of God, were condemned to punish-

(1) *Acts*, III, 19.

ments of dreadful severity, a faint image however, of the punishments reserved in the other world for the most venial sins. What then can I expect, who have committed so many sins? Though I would rather forget them, God will forget nothing; nothing will be left unpunished, not even a slight fault such as an *idle word* (1). Our Lord Himself assures us of it. What a motive for doing penance, serious, continual penance! This holy time is particularly suitable for it: special graces facilitate its practice: *Now is the acceptable time* (2).

AFRECTIONS. Confess your sins and infidelities humbly before God. Express a desire to do true penance for them. Ask for grace to fulfil this desire generously.

RESOLUTIONS. Decide on the acts of penance and mortification which you desire to perform every day in this second week of Lent as you did in the first week.

POINT II. — THE INSULT PROFFERED TO GOD BY OUR SINS.

CONSIDERATIONS. By each mortal sin we insult God in a three-fold way, each being of infinite malice inasmuch as it is committed against His infinite Majesty. There is the insult of insubordination and rebellion: God commands and is not obeyed; the insult of contempt: we prefer a passing, unworthy, often disgraceful gratification, to God and His laws; and the insult of ingratitude: we make use of God's gifts to offend Him. By each venial sin we likewise offer God a threefold insult. This insult is less,

(1) Matt., XII, 36. — (2) II Corin., VI, 2.

it is true, but nevertheless the malice of it is such that if we could by a single venial sin change all the souls in hell into as many blessed who would praise God eternally in heaven, we might not commit it, because all the praises given by creatures would not be sufficient to compensate for the insult that is paid to God by a single venial sin.

APPLICATIONS. This then is the malice of the insult you have offered to the Lord your God. But this is not all : this malice grows in proportion to the light and benefits received. Faith declares this : reason cannot deny it. What then should you think of the many venial sins of which you have been guilty ? Who can count their number ? Once more, what a good reason for doing penance during those acceptable days of Lent, of which is said in the Divine Office : The days of penance are come to reclaim us from our sins.

AFFECTIONS and RESOLUTIONS. As in the preceding Point.

POINT III. — THE EVIL DONE TO JESUS BY OUR SINS.

CONSIDERATIONS. What is it that made Jesus Christ the *Man of Sorrows* above all others, according to the expression of the prophet Isaias : *Virum dolorum* (1). Our sins. He took upon Himself the sins of the entire human race in order to atone for them. From that moment God saw in Him nothing more than the Guilty One on whom all the blows of His just vengeance must fall. *He was bruised* by the blows,

(1) *Isaias*, LIII, 3.

says the Holy Spirit, *for our sins* (1). Yours are the sins which scourged Him, crowned Him with thorns, which struck Him, spat on Him, nailed and put Him to death on the cross!

APPLICATIONS. What a terrible thought and what an overwhelming reproach; there have been moments in my life when in unison with the deicide Jews, I have cried : Let Jesus Christ be crucified ! and let Barabbas live ! Let my passion live !

There have been moments then when, with His executioners, I have helped to drive the nails into the hands and feet of my Saviour ! I have done it as far as was in my power every time I committed a mortal sin. And every time I have sinned venially, I have added fresh suffering to the mortal wounds of Jesus. These thoughts strengthened the arms of the holy penitents of the desert against themselves. Imitate them during these great days of penance and universal atonement.

COLLOQUY. With our Divine Saviour, in accordance with the affections and resolutions of the first two Points.

TUESDAY.

JESUS MADE THE SPORT

OF THE SOLDIERS AND SERVANTS OF CAIPHAS.

I. *Prelude.* See Jesus in the midst of common soldiers and insolent servants who insult and illtreat Him.

II. *Prelude.* Ask for grace to understand the value of humiliations, and to love them for love of Jesus Christ, your King and your Model.

(1) *Isaias*, LIII, 5.

POINT I.

And the men that held him, mocked him (1).

CONSIDERATIONS. Whilst Caiphas, full of his triumph in having procured the condemnation of Jesus, goes to enjoy a night's rest, he delivers his Prisoner to the guards, or rather to the insolence of his servants, and to the soldiers of the Praetorium. These drag Him away at once to a subterranean room which served as a prison for criminals. What a humiliation for Jesus! If they would only allow Him to rest there : but no! incited by the hatred their masters bear towards the Saviour, they gather round Him, making Him the sport of their brutality, their object being to see who will torment Him most with mockery, insults, blasphemies, curses and ill-treatment. And this scene of horror lasted throughout the night.

APPLICATIONS. Picture to yourself vividly the pain and humiliation of Jesus, made in this way the plaything of coarse, shameless and blasphemous men throughout that entire night without a moment's rest, then nights of suffering will no longer appear long to you, and days which you may have to pass amongst uneducated, coarse or ungrateful people will no longer seem so wearisome and unbearable.

AFFECTIONS. Enter into the humiliations of your Divine Master. — Humbly acknowledge the share you have had in them by causing them through your pride.

RESOLUTIONS. To bear the contempt to which we may be subjected in silence, of at least, without vexation.

(1) Luke, xxii, 63.

POINT II.

Then did they spit in his face and buffeted him (1).

CONSIDERATIONS. They spat in His face! Who would ever have believed, had not the Gospel explicitly said it, that the brutality of these cruel men would have gone as far as that, or that God made Man would have desired to submit to such ignominy, the greatest, the deepest that can be proffered to a man of even the lowest rank? And nevertheless Jesus submitted to it, and bore it patiently time after time, without moving, without uttering a word, as was foretold by Isaias : *I have not turned away my face from them that... spit upon me (2).*

APPLICATIONS. Will you now complain, whoever you are, or give way to feelings of indignation and revenge because you are insulted, or merely because you think you are not treated with sufficient respect, or according to your merits? O rather fall at the feet of Jesus and exclaim with St. Bernard : What! my Master, my King is despised, and is even spat upon by His most despicable subjects, and I wish to be honoured by my equals. I who deserve through my sins to be cast into the depths of hell with the outcasts of the human race. No, never! rather may I be forgotten and despised by all men in this world if so I may obtain mercy in eternity.

AFFECTIONS. In accordance with these feelings.

RESOLUTIONS. To ask for a love of humiliations.

(1) Matt., xxvi, 67. — (2) Isaias, L, 6.

POINT III.

And they blindfolded him, and smote his face. And they asked him, saying (1): Prophecy unto us, O Christ; who is he that struck thee (2)? And blaspheming, many other things they said against him (3).

CONSIDERATIONS. Let us contemplate with sorrowful and silent wonder the King of glory, *despised and the most abject of men* (4), drinking to the dregs the chalice of ignominy which He had accepted in the Garden of Olives. Let us contemplate Him seated on a block of wood, with His hands bound, His eyes blindfolded, in the midst of shameless drunken men who come in turn to spit in His face, to strike Him and shout : Say Prophet, say who is he that struck Thee? — who pour the greatest insults and blasphemies from their impure mouths, and then let us ask ourselves : Who is He who submitted to these outrageous insults? How? For whom? Why does He submit to them?

APPLICATIONS. It is here that the Christian, should recall the resolution made so many times, and renewed in moments of fervour, perhaps during a retreat, to be scorned and held as of no account by the world, with Jesus Christ despised and treated as the last of men, rather than to seek esteem in the opinion of men. How do you stand in regard to this resolution and all that is implied in its practice?

COLLOQUY. With the holy angels who witnessed all the insults suffered by Jesus Christ during this night. Beg them to praise, bless and exalt your Divine Saviour for you and with

(1) Luke, xxii. 64. — (2) Matt., xxvi, 68. — (3) Luke, xxii, 65. — (4) *Isaiâs*, liii, 3.

you, and to obtain for you the sublime feelings of St. John of the Cross when he exclaimed : Lord Jesus, all that I ask is to suffer and be despised for Thee! *Pati et contemni propter te, Domine.*

WEDNESDAY.

THE TRIPLE DENIAL OF ST. PETER.

I. *Prelude.* See the Apostle in the court of Caiphas near the fire, in the company of the soldiers and servants of the High-Priest.

II. *Prelude.* Ask for knowledge and distrust of self.

POINT I.

There cometh one of the maidservants of the high-priest, and when she had seen Peter warming himself, looking on him she saith: Thou also wast with Jesus of Nazareth. But he denied, saying: I neither know nor understand what thou sayest (1).

CONSIDERATIONS. The Gospel relates that St. Peter, having recovered from his first fright, followed Jesus from afar off to the city and into the court of Caiphas. There, at the voice of a woman, the Prince of the Apostles denied his Divine Master, after having protested his inviolable fidelity more loudly than all the others. What a fall, what ignominious weakness!

APPLICATIONS. Who cannot recognise man's weakness in the person of St. Peter, and yet not entertain fears for his own future? However, as there is no result without a cause, let us see for our instruction, what were the causes of the Apostle's fall. The Fathers point out four principally : the presumption on his

(1) Mark, xiv, 66-68.

own strength ; his negligence in watching and praying with his Master ; his recklessness in exposing himself to danger ; and, finally his lukewarmness added to idle curiosity. *Peter*, says St. Matthew, *followed him afar off... that he might see the end* (1). Go over in your mind, your falls, and the mistakes you have made, and you will see that they can be attributed to one of these causes.

AFFECTIONS. Humbly ask our Lord that your experience in the past may preserve you in the future. Thank Him for having raised you up from your falls.

RESOLUTIONS. To be on my guard against the chief cause of my falls. To ask for grace to know that cause well and to conquer it.

POINT II.

Another maid saw him, and she saith... This man also was with Jesus of Nazareth. And again he denied with an oath : That I know not the man (2).

CONSIDERATIONS. Peter's fear increased with the danger ; it caused him to fall more grievously. His first denial had been a lie and a cowardice, for he spoke against his convictions and the feelings of his heart ; to the second denial he added perjury. His falls succeeded each other and became more and more serious.

APPLICATIONS. This is the course of passion. He who makes one concession to human respect, to gluttony, curiosity, resentment, luxury or to any other vicious inclination is carried further on. Never say : I will satisfy this cra-

(1) Matt., xxvi, 58. — (2) Ibid., 71-72.

ving once more, and it will then leave me in peace ; or else, I shall go so far in evil and no further ; for this would prove that you did not know yourself, and that you were deluding yourself in a remarkable degree. Passions resemble fire, and fire never says : It is enough. The saying is St. Augustine's. He spoke from experience. What does your own experience tell you ?

AFFECTIONS. Lament before God your blindness and the strength of the passions to which you have succumbed.

RESOLUTIONS. To resist all first thoughts of evil promptly and energetically.

POINT III.

And after the space as it were of one hour (1), one of the servants of the high-priest... saith to him : Did not I see thee in the garden with him (2) ? And... they came that stood by, and said to Peter : Surely thou also art one of them... Peter denies him a third time, and he began to curse and to swear (3)... saying, I know not this man of whom you speak (4).

CONSIDERATIONS. This then is the dreadful progress the Apostle made in the path of iniquity. In less than two hours he denied Jesus three times ; he perjured himself twice, and ended by confirming his perjuries by shocking imprecations. What a humiliation and sorrow it was for the Heart of his Divine Master Who, at that very moment a short distance away, was enduring the most horrible outrages for love of him !

APPLICATIONS. We are tempted here to ask

(1) Luke, xxii, 59. — (2) John, xviii, 26. — (3) Matt., xxvi, 73. — (4) Mark, xiv, 71.

ourselves why our Lord allowed him whom He destined to be the head of His Church, to fall so ignominiously. Why above all He wished the pen of the Evangelists to make it known to the whole world? We may believe that is was, according to interpreters : first, so that the incomparable dignity of the Shepherd of shepherds should always be allied, in St. Peter, to a profound humility and a great sympathy for the weakness of his subordinates ; — secondly that it would be quite clear that the Catholic Church, that great wonder of the world, supported by a foundation so weak in itself, is the work of Almighty God and not of men ; — thirdly so as to warn all men to whatsoever dignity and sanctity they may have attained, of their weakness, and of their constant need of grace. Let us admire and bless the wisdom of God's counsels.

COLLOQUY. With St. Peter, whose fear deprived him of reflection, and caused him to forget all the protestations of fidelity and devotion he made some hours before.

THURSDAY.

THE REPENTANCE AND CONVERSION OF ST. PETER.

- I. *Prelude.* Imagine St. Peter weeping over his sin.
- II. *Prelude.* Ask for the spirit of compunction.

POINT I.

The Lord turning looked on Peter (1).

CONSIDERATIONS. — How great and inexpress-

(1) Luke. xxii, 61.

ible is the goodness of our Divine Saviour! In the midst of his extreme suffering, and while He is being overwhelmed with outrages and blasphemies, He forgets Himself that He may help His unfaithful disciple. He is more affected by his unhappy fall than by His own injuries. *He looked on Peter*, says the Evangelist : a look of mingled reproach and pity, which was to be the beginning of his repentance and conversion.

APPLICATIONS. Every day the goodness of our Lord is shown thus in regard to so many wretched sinners. He warns them by His grace by giving them one of those looks of pity which the penitent King asked for so earnestly when he said : *Look thou upon me and have mercy upon me* (1). Fear had taken possession of Peter in Caiphas' house, even to the point of blinding him in regard to his actions and the wretched state to which he had been reduced by sin. Jesus warned him and opened his eyes. Therefore his gratitude towards such a good Master was without limit or measure for all the rest of his life. Think of your past infidelities, and you will see that more than once grace has warned you and roused you from the sleep of death. How great therefore your gratitude should be!

AFFECTIONS. Expressions from a grateful and devoted heart.

RESOLUTIONS. To have recourse to prayer immediately after a fall, for fear of falling into the sleep of death.

(1) *Ps.*, xxiv, 16.

POINT II.

Peter remembered the word that Jesus has said unto him : Before the cock crow twice, thou shalt thrice deny me (1).

CONSIDERATIONS. See what sudden and marvellous effects were produced on the prevaricating Apostle by a single look from Jesus. In a moment it dispersed the darkness which enveloped Peter's soul; it made him see clearly the enormity of his sin; it reminded him distinctly of all that his good Master had predicted at the Last Supper, and in the Garden of Olives; it awoke in his heart, not despair, but the most bitter compunction, it brought about his conversion, and made him a model of penitence.

APPLICATIONS. These are the wonderful effects of grace; it penetrates into the soul gently, enlightening and strengthening it; it enables it to see the nothingness of creatures, the hideousness and enormity of sin; it fills it with a bitter but salutary compunction, causing tears of mingled sorrow, joy and love, it purifies it from all inordinate affections, detaches it from earth, and raises it up to God.

AFFECTIONS. *O most blessed Grace, come thou down unto me, come and in the morning fill me with Thy comfort and strength, and make me to be continually given to good works, and that my soul may not faint for weariness and dryness of mind (2).*

RESOLUTIONS Often to implore the help of grace.

(1) Mark, xiv, 72. — (2) *Imitation of Christ*, Book III, Chap. LV.

POINT III.

And going forth, he wept bitterly (1).

CONSIDERATIONS. Inasmuch as Peter's fall was serious and scandalous, so was his penance generous and exemplary. Without losing a moment, he escapes from the place and the people the that were occasion of his fall; as soon as he is alone and has come to himself his sorrow breaks forth in sighs, and he gives way to tears which will never cease to flow until his death. Tears and sighs caused not by the thought of having allowed himself to be vanquished so ignominiously, but by the thought of having forgotten, offended and grieved his Divine Master. Therefore our Lord accepts them. Not only will He forgive the repentant disciple, but He will not even deprive him of any of the prerogatives granted to him before his fall.

APPLICATIONS. Let us imitate the Apostle in his penitence if we have imitated him or should unhappily do so in his infidelity. Like him, let us draw from the remembrance of our past ingratitude, and of God's goodness to us, a more ardent love, more profound humility, more steadfast trust and a generosity which will be more fruitful in every kind of good work. In this way, assisted by grace we shall also know how to bring good out of evil.

COLLOQUY. With the repentant disciple. Join him in praising and exalting the inexhaustible goodness of the Heart of Jesus; say to Him often, especially after your evening's self-

(1) Matt., xxvi, 75.

examination : O Jesus, I must ask forgiveness for a countless number of distractions which have crept into my thoughts, words, intentions and actions, but I must above all, thank Thee for the innumerable graces Thou hast granted me, for Thy goodness transcends my malice.

FRIDAY.

JESUS DELIVERED BY HIS PEOPLE TO THE ROMAN GOVERNOR, PONTIUS PILATE.

I. *Prelude.* See our Divine Lord going in the midst of the shouting populace towards Pilate's palace.

II. *Prelude.* Ask for grace to be ever more and more united to your Divine Saviour.

POINT I.

And when morning was come, all the chief priests and ancients of the people took counsel against Jesus, that they might put him to death (1).

CONSIDERATIONS. What activity and eagerness these iniquitous judges showed by meeting so early, curtailing their sleep, and anticipating the day. Why did they take so much trouble? To satisfy their hatred against the Innocent One who outshone them, to seek means to put Him to death. So much activity to accomplish so horrible a crime !

APPLICATIONS. Is there no cause for shame in the thought that these poor wretches were more active in doing evil than you perhaps are in doing good? That they were more ready to get up in the early morning to consider the means of putting Jesus to death, than you many times are in finding time to say your prayers

(1) Matt., xxvii, 1.

well and not hurriedly, to hear Mass, to make a short meditation or at least to do some spiritual reading. If you must reproach yourself in this way, endeavour to make it impossible in the future. So much pleasure and happiness is felt at night when the day has been well begun.

AFFECTIONS. Let us confess with deep shame that we are often less persevering and generous in doing good, than the wicked are in doing evil. Let us conceive a holy indignation against ourselves on this account.

RESOLUTIONS. To consider practical means for killing sensuality, which is the origin of spiritual idleness, and the chief cause of our infidelities.

POINT II.

And they brought him bound, and delivered him to Pontius Pilate the governor (1).

CONSIDERATIONS. It is by His own people that Jesus is denied and delivered to the Gentiles : by those very people whom He overwhelmed with blessings, and who, astonished at the miracles of goodness He worked, had exclaimed : *Never was the like seen in Israel (2). He hath done all things well, he hath made both the deaf to hear and the dumb to speak (3).* What an indignity ! What monstrous ingratitude on the part of the Jews ! And what pain must have been given to the Heart of our loving Saviour by this humiliating and bitter ingratitude of His people.

APPLICATIONS. There is no one whose heart is not stirred with indignation. At the thought of this example of Jewish perfidy and ingratitude ;

(1) Matt., xxvii, 2. — (2) Matt., ix, 33. — (3) Mark, vii, 37.

but alas! how many Christians there are who are no less perfidious and ungrateful than the Jews when by sacrilegious Communion, they deliver Jesus to the devil who reigns in their hearts. When, by their daily sins, they return evil for good to that same God and Saviour from whom they have received immeasurably greater graces and favours than had the Jews.

AFFECTIONS. Let us mourn at the feet of Jesus the sacrileges committed by those He adopted as His children in Holy Baptism. — Let us lament our own ingratitude and inconstancy.

RESOLUTIONS. To renew our protestations of love and attachment to Jesus Christ by renewing the vows of our baptism.

POINT III.

And they went not into the hall, that they might not be defiled (1).

CONSIDERATIONS. Note the false and grossly mistaken consciences of these men who are well instructed but are men of passion. They are afraid of contracting a purely legal stain, by entering a pagan's house, and are not afraid of staining their souls and their consciences by giving way to their envy and hatred by plotting the death of an innocent man.

APPLICATIONS. Are there not many people who are devout and pride themselves on scrupulously observing what is merely accessory, but who neglect or very imperfectly observe what is essential? Who are very faithful to certain practices of piety which they may have

(1) John, xviii, 28.

laid on themselves of their own free will, but who do not scruple to fail in important public duties, and in what they owe to their parents, their children, wife or husband? Do we not see others also who pride themselves on great regularity in exterior things, and who neglect the interior ones? Are these not also deplorable aberrations of a false conscience? Have you nothing to reproach yourself with on this point? Go into details, examine yourself carefully and straightforwardly.

COLLOQUY. With Jesus. — Express the feelings which have made the most impression on your heart.

SATURDAY.

THE DESPAIR AND DEATH OF JUDAS.

I. *Prelude.* Imagine Judas throwing down before the chief priests the thirty pieces of silver which he had received from them.

II. *Prelude.* Ask for grace never to succumb to temptations of distrust and discouragement.

POINT I

Then Judas, who betrayed him, seeing that he was condemned, repenting himself, brought back the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and ancients (1).

CONSIDERATIONS. When Judas undertook to betray his Divine Master for thirty pieces of silver, he expected the Incarnate God would escape from their hands, as He had often done before. But seeing that his avaricious calculations were wrong, that Jesus had given Himself up to the fury of the Jews, and that He was about to undergo the sentence of death, he was

(1) Matt., xxvii, 3.

filled with horror at the thought of his crime, and the everlasting shame which would fall on him. The silver which he had so much coveted, weighed on his conscience like an overpowering burden. Cursing it, he took it to return it to those from whom he had received it.

APPLICATIONS. This is the extremity we usually reach when we allow ourselves to be carried away by sin. Before committing evil, we only see the seductive side, and blind ourselves to all the rest, but as soon as it is committed, remorse and shame is felt; then with horror, we see the fatal consequences; and instead of the expected enjoyment, only misery and bitter regret is felt. This also happens in less serious infidelities. What does your own experience tell you on this point?

AFFECTIONS. Let us confess and lament our past blindness at the feet of Jesus.

RESOLUTIONS. To take as a constant rule of conduct this sentence of the author of the *Imitation* : *True quietness of heart therefore is gotten by resisting our passions, not by yielding to them* (1).

POINT II.

I have sinned in betraying innocent blood. But they said : What is that to us ? Look thou to it (2).

CONSIDERATIONS. Judas, by confessing to the chief priests the crime which he had committed, and to which they had incited him, expected to receive some flattering reassuring words, or, at least, some signs of interest from them; but he only received that scornful and terrible answer which succeeded in driving him to the

(1) Book I, Chap. vi. — (2) Matt., xxvii, 4

last extremity of despair : *What is that to us? Look thou to it.*

APPLICATIONS. Never count on the sympathy of those whom you have served to the detriment of what you owe to God and your conscience; do not even count on their esteem. They will seem to approve of you, outwardly they may flatter you, but in the depths of their hearts they will despise you; your human respect and sinful compliance will be but baseness and cowardice in their eyes.

AFFECTIONS. Teach me Lord, to love and fear Thee only; to seek peace and glory in Thee alone.

RESOLUTIONS. Never do anything, nor omit anything for fear of men, nor solely with the object of pleasing them.

POINT III.

And casting down the pieces of silver in the temple, he departed; and went and hanged himself (1).

CONSIDERATIONS. The miserable despair of Judas was the greatest of his sins. Believing that his crime was unpardonable in God's sight, he implicitly denied that God is essentially Infinite in all His attributes, in His mercy as well as His justice. Man's wickedness which is finite, cannot equal, far less surpass, the infinite Goodness. Therefore if Judas, like St. Peter, had thrown himself, humble and contrite, at the feet of Jesus, he too, would have obtained his forgiveness, and have retained, we have every right to believe, his dignity as an apostle.

APPLICATIONS. We are men. We may fall,

(1) Matt., xxvii, 5.

and fall very low. If this misfortune should ever come upon us, let us cast every thought of despair from us; let us imitate St. Peter in his humble repentance, by having recourse to the inexhaustible mercy of God, and we shall share in the glory in heaven, with the penitent saints. To strengthen us in these dispositions, let us say with holy King David : *In thee, O lord, have I hoped, let me never be confounded* (1). Let us also recollect when it is necessary, those beautiful words of St. Augustine : If you are afraid of God, throw yourself on His breast.

COLLOQUY. With our Father who is in heaven, and who from the height of His throne invites sinners to have recourse to His clemency and infinite mercy.

Third week in Lent.

SUNDAY.

JESUS ACCUSED BY HIS PEOPLE

BEFORE PILATE.

I. *Prelude.* See the crowds assembled in front of Pilate's palace clamouring against Jesus.

II. *Prelude.* Ask for grace to bear false imputations with Christian resignation.

POINT 1.

Pilate therefore went out to them and said : What accusation bring you against this man? They answered and said, to him : If he were not a malefactor, we should not have delivered him up to thee (2).

CONSIDERATIONS. We cannot restrain a feeling

(1) Ps., xl., 1. — (2) John, xviii, 29-30.

of profound indignation on seeing the principal Jews and the misguided crowds treating Jesus, their Messiah, as a malefactor, and persecuting Him with their hatred. Jesus who, far from doing anyone the least harm, had left the trace of His benefits at every step. It is the height of ingratitude and wickedness.

APPLICATIONS. We still have that terrible and sorrowful sight before our eyes for are not Jesus and His holy faith objects of hatred and the most atrocious calumnies? And from whom? Very often from the very ones, who have been most favoured with our Lord's gifts; those who are superior to others from through fortune or talent, and who only use their power for the purpose of misguiding others, and inciting them against Christ and His Church. Nevertheless let us not curse them, but on the contrary pity them : for the longer their punishment is postponed, the more terrible it will be.

AFFECTIONS. Let us ask God for the conversion of our persecutors, and for ourselves the grace to suffer willingly for love of Him.

RESOLUTIONS. As times become more evil to strive to increase in zeal, trust and fervour.

POINT II.

Pilate therefore said to them : Take him you and judge him according to your law. The Jews therefore said to him : It is not lawful for us to put any man to death (1).

CONSIDERATIONS. Why do the chief priests and the scribes, the accusers of Jesus, not wish to judge him themselves, although Pilate

(1) John, xviii, 31.

authorises and invites them to do so? So that Jesus, condemned by the Supreme magistrate should appear more guilty in the eyes of the people. So that the obloquy of His death might be cast on others. That He might be condemned to the punishment of the cross, the most ignominious and cruel of all; a punishment which was customary amongst the Romans, but not in use amongst the Hebrews inasmuch as it was not decreed by any of their laws. What hypocrisy and hidden malice under the appearance of legality and virtue! Nevertheless, without desiring or knowing it, these iniquitous men assisted in the fulfillment of the prophecies and of the merciful designs of Our Lord, Who had foretold this manner of death, and Who, for love of us, wished to drink the chalice of humiliations and suffering to the very dregs. In this way God draws good out of evil.

APPLICATIONS. This is still, and will ever be the economy of Divine Providence. Therefore let us beware of being apprehensive and irresolute in faith when we witness the momentary triumph of the wicked, and the success they gain by their treacherous plans. God, Whose infinite wisdom comprehends events in their entirety will draw glory from them, for He will turn them to the advantage of His Church and His elect.

AFFECTIONS. Adore the inscrutable designs of Providence, in the evil the wicked are permitted to do us.

RESOLUTIONS. To reason as a man of faith, in a Christian and edifying manner on the events which agitate the world and disturb the peace of the Church.

POINT III.

They began to accuse him, saying : We have found this man perverting our nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Caesar, and saying that he is Christ the King (1).

CONSIDERATIONS. Three principal charges are here alleged against Jesus : He is accused of perverting the people, of dissuading them from paying tribute and of giving Himself the name of Christ the King. The first two are obviously false, for He preached and practised the opposite ; the third is also false in the sense the Jews attached to it, that is to say, in the sense of an earthly kingdom which would overshadow Caesar. Was it not the height of audacity to be so untruthful as this, and to calumniate the innocent before the chief magistrate of the nation ?

APPLICATIONS. If Our Lord was willing to be the victim of these atrocious calumnies without defending Himself, or appearing to be affected by them, it was in order to teach us to disregard men's judgments when we have done our duty, and our conscience does not accuse us. How have we profited by the lessons of our Divine Master ? In what should we correct ourselves ?

COLLOQUY. With the Blessed Virgin, who witnessed the dreadful and grotesque accusations brought against her divine Son. — The affections and resolutions suggested in the first two Points can supply abundant matter for the Colloquy in this meditation as in all the others.

(1) Luke, XXIII, 2.

MONDAY.

REASONS FOR DOING PENANCE

DERIVED FROM THE THOUGHT OF THE LOSSES
CAUSED BY SIN.

I. *Prelude.* Imagine St. John the Evangelist writing these words to the Bishop of Laodicea : *Be zealous therefore and do penance* (1).

II. *Prelude.* Ask for grace to make amends for past losses by supererogatory works of penance.

POINT I.

CONSIDERATIONS. Mortal sin makes us lose the friendship of God, sanctifying grace, and the right to the vision and eternal possession of God; these are inestimable favours which we received at Holy Baptism. As long as we remain in a state of mortal sin we remain separated from God, the enemy of God, child and slave of the devil, and condemned under the same anathema as he. You may have passed many days in that wretched state; — does not the total number of these days form a considerable part of your life? What a bitter thought! It made St. Augustine shed many tears. He could only console himself by sacrificing himself on the altar of the love of God, by works of penance.

APPLICATIONS. Do the same during this third week in Lent. And if God has preserved you from repeated falls into mortal sin, reflect that your numerous venial sins should be a sufficient motive for penance. For after all, of these sins

(1) *Apoc.*, iii, 19.

do not make us lose the friendship of God, they certainly diminish and cool it. Every venial sin prevents us acquiring a further degree of grace, which corresponds to a degree of glory in heaven. Count, if you can, the number of your venial sins and see how many degrees of grace and glory you have lost. What a loss! Hasten to make amends, as far as you can, by fervent penance.

AFFECTIONS. Ask earnestly for the spirit of penance.

RESOLUTIONS. To put generously into practice this week the different ways of doing penance which are recommended on the first Monday of holy Lent.

POINT II.

CONSIDERATIONS. Mortal sin makes us lose in the second place, the supernatural life of the soul. This supernatural life consists in union with God through the bonds of love. Mortal sin breaks this bond, destroys this union, and as long as the soul is thus separated from God, it is like a body without life which cannot perform any act which will merit heaven. Even our best actions are dead. Consequently a day passed in that state is a day lost for eternity. A month passed in that state is a month lost for eternity.

APPLICATIONS. Oh! if, enlightened by the brilliant light of faith you could adequately realise the immense loss you have sustained, what zeal you would have for works of penance in order to regain, in part at least, what you have lost! Venial sin does not destroy supernatural life, but it weakens it: it becomes less fruitful in good works, and those works become in their turn,

less pleasing and less meritorious in God's sight. Besides, in consequence of human imperfection, our good works are usually accompanied by some secret faults which diminish their merit in a greater or less degree. The Saints sought to make amends by supererogatory works of penance, in the exercise of continual mortification. Why should we not imitate them, we who have sinned greatly, and have done so little penance?

AFFECTIONS and RESOLUTIONS. The same as in the preceding Point.

POINT III.

CONSIDERATIONS. Mortal sin makes us lose in the third place, all the beauty of our soul, and makes it abhorrent in God's sight, says the Holy Spirit. *They... have become abominable in iniquities* (1). A single mortal sin turned an angel into a monster, a devil, and cast him down from heaven into hell. What then of a soul stained by several mortal sins in God's sight? What destiny is reserved for it in eternity, where punishment will be proportionate to the number of sins committed?

APPLICATIONS. Have you possibly merited that unhappy fate? What an urgent reason for you to avail yourself of the severities of penance, and to persevere in them until death! For after all, if it is certain that you have sinned grievously, it is not equally certain that your penance has been proportionate. Another motive for penance is this : faith tells us that every venial sin, even the least, stains our soul,

(1) *Ps.*, LII, 2.

and that *There shall not enter into it* (heaven) *anything defiled* (1). Yet how many stains we imprint on our souls daily, and how few of them we have effaced. Our sufferings in purgatory, and the time of our exclusion from heaven, will be in proportion to them. Think over it well. Oh if it were granted to you to understand what it is to endure the pains of purgatory for one moment! What it means for a soul that is detained there, to be deprived for one moment of the beatific vision, the greatest severities of penance would seem sweet and light to you.

COLLOQUY. With the Blessed Virgin, rightly proclaimed the *Refuge of sinners, and Mother of Mercy* (2).

TUESDAY.

THE FIRST EXAMINATION OF JESUS

AT THE TRIBUNAL OF PILATE.

I. *Prelude*. See Jesus in a humble but resolute attitude before the Roman governor Pontius Pilate.

II. *Prelude*. Ask for grace to make this meditation well.

POINT I.

Pilate therefore went into the hall again, and called Jesus and said to him : Art thou the King of the Jews?... Jesus answered : My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, my servants would certainly strive that I should not be delivered to the Jews : but now my kingdom is not from hence (3).

CONSIDERATIONS. Jesus Christ was not King

(1) *Apoc.*, xxi, 27.

(2) Read again from time to time the remarks on the colloquies, affections and resolutions on pages 37, 48, 54.

(3) John, xviii, 33-36.

of the Jews nor of this world, in the ordinary sense of the word, because this was not His intention. The kingdom which He reserved for Himself is the Church or the union of those who submit willingly to His doctrine and His laws. The Church is in this world, but is not of this world. Her origin is celestial; earth is the place of her pilgrimage and her combats. She must return to heaven, and there establish the eternally glorious kingdom of Jesus and His elect. This is the kingdom He speaks of when He says before Pilate : *My kingdom*, and when He says to His disciples *Seek ye... first the kingdom of God* (1).

APPLICATIONS. How fortunate we are to be by Holy Baptism children of the Church, subjects of the kingdom of Jesus Christ, future heirs of His Kingdom in heaven! That we may be certain of the possession of this kingdom, what must we do? It is necessary that, though living in this world, we should nevertheless not be of this world, but that permeated by the spirit of our Mother the Church we should associate all our affections and hopes with heaven. In that way, we shall live according to the Apostle's expression, in heaven by anticipation : *Our conversation is in heaven*, he writes to the Philippians (2).

AFFECTIONS. *Thy kingdom come* : reign now O Jesus, in our hearts so that we may reign eternally with Thee in heaven.

RESOLUTIONS. To become even more and more detached from every earthly affection.

(1) Matt., vi, 33. — (2) *Philipp.*, iii, 20.

POINT II.

Pilate therefore said to him : Art thou a king then? Jesus answered : Thou sayest that I am a king... For this cause came I into the world, that I should give testimony to the truth. Everyone that is of the truth, heareth my voice. Pilate said to him : What is truth? And when he had said this, he went out (1).

CONSIDERATIONS. Here we have a striking example of human levity and its instability. Pilate was supremely interested to know the truth regarding the wonderful Person before him who had been so diversely appraised, and especially after he had heard Him say : *I came into the world that I should give testimony to the truth?* Therefore it was quite natural for him to ask that question. *What is truth?* We would imagine that he would await the answer with eager curiosity. Yet he did nothing of the kind. Pilate abruptly left the praetorium without waiting for the answer.

APPLICATIONS. Pilate's levity and inconsistency astonish you; you condemn it, and with reason. But see if you can find anything similar in yourself. Before performing certain actions, or before deciding difficult matters, you have the habit of saying a short prayer, to question our Lord in order to know His will; but does it not happen after that, that you hurriedly pass on to action, without having recollected yourself to hear the answer, or perhaps that you hear the voice of God inwardly without paying any attention to it? Is that not imitating the levity and inconsistency of the Roman judge?

AFFECTIONS. Acknowledgement. — Salutary shame.

(1) John, xviii, 37-38.

RESOLUTIONS. To make our invocations to the Holy Ghost, and always say our prayers with such earnestness that we may be able to say with Samuel : *Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth* (1).

POINT III.

*Pilate went out again to the Jews and saith to them :
I find no cause in him* (2).

CONSIDERATIONS. Pilate as an astute and experienced man had perceived from the first that the complaints made against Jesus were groundless. However, his position as Roman governor obliged him to question the accused judicially on His claim to royalty. But from the answers of Jesus the judge immediately concluded that His royalty was not of a nature to overshadow the powers of this world, and he did not hesitate to declare Him innocent by saying *I find no cause in him*.

APPLICATIONS. Here we see in Pilate an honest man and a lover of truth in spite of his inconsistencies. Had his firmness as a judge equalled his honesty and good sense, he would never have passed the sentence of death upon Jesus. But his fear of falling into disfavour made him weak and timid. The Jews skilfully made use of these fears, and forced from him the most iniquitous of sentences. This is the way the devil acts in regard to ourselves : he studies our weak side, and uses it skilfully, and if we are not on our guard, he leads us into the greatest transgressions. Break the power of his cunning by watchfulness and prayer. In the morning foresee when and where

(1) 1 Kings, iii, 10. — (2) John, xviii, 38.

you will be most exposed to the dangers of yielding, and make your resolutions accordingly. Ask for grace to be true to them, and see in your evening's self-examination how far you have been faithful.

COLLOQUY. With our Divine Master and Model Jesus.

WEDNESDAY.

THE ADMIRABLE SILENCE OF JESUS

AT PILATE'S TRIBUNAL.

I. *Prelude.* See Jesus calm and silent in the midst of the clamours and accusations of the mob gathered together against Him.

II. *Prelude.* Ask for grace to imitate faithfully the noble example given here by your Divine Saviour.

POINT I.

And when he was accused by the chief priests and ancients, he answered nothing (1).

CONSIDERATIONS. The first charges made by the Jews appeared so vague and destitute of proof to Pilate himself that he felt bound to challenge them, and solemnly to declare the innocence of Jesus. The other charges which they stubbornly continued to produce were no addition to the first; to answer them was beneath the dignity of our Lord. Moreover the sanctity of His life answered for Him; not only did it confound His calumniators, but it proved His Divinity. It is true that He hid it under an appearance of weakness; but what He had already answered the judge was sufficient to make it clear.

(1) Matt., xxvii, 12.

APPLICATIONS. Happy the Christian whose conduct is a constant testimony of his virtue; a conclusive answer to all the accusations which envy and wickedness may invent against him! Happier still if his conscience testifies to a constant effort to be blameless in God's sight. Are you one of these?

AFFECTIONS. *Let my heart be undefiled in thy justifications* (1), O Lord, and *I will not fear what man can do unto me* (2).

RESOLUTIONS. To love the practice of solid virtue.

POINT II.

And Pilate again asked him, saying : Answerest thou nothing ? behold in how many things they accuse thee (3)? *But Jesus still answered nothing so that the governor wondered exceedingly* (4).

CONSIDERATIONS. Pilate's astonishment was quite natural. Certainly, if a man is accused without appeal before a tribunal and is implicated in a capital charge, what is more natural than that he should defend himself, and make use of all the resources of his mind, in order to prove his innocence, especially when the judge shows that he is favourably inclined towards him, and urges him to answer? Nevertheless, it was under these circumstances that Jesus was silent. He who had so often confounded His enemies with a few words, and roused the indignation of the crowd against them. It was impossible for Pilate to understand the reasons for the silence in which Jesus wrapt Himself, with a dignity far removed from all passion and resentment.

(1) Ps., cxviii, 80. — (2) Ps., cxvii, 6. — (3) Mark, xv, 4.
— (4) Matt., xxvii, 14.

APPLICATIONS. We are more fortunate than Pilate for we know the reasons for the heroic silence of our Divine Lord. He had determined to die for us, and after having said what was necessary regarding the truth, He did not wish to utter a word which might save His life. In the second place, He wished before dying, to atone for our innumerable sins of speech, by a silence which must have cost so much; to encourage us by His example to govern our speech when passion urges us to answer with scorn those whose right and duty it is to reprove us; or with bitterness, those who are wanting in respect towards us.

AFFECTIONS. Express your reverence and gratitude to Jesus. Ask His pardon for having been so faithless in following His example.

RESOLUTIONS. I shall examine myself on the sins of speech I have committed, so that I may not fall into them again.

POINT III.

But they were more earnest saying : He stirreth up the people, teaching throughout all Judea, beginning from Galilee to this place (1).

CONSIDERATIONS. Pilate, after having acknowledged and proclaimed the innocence of the accused, should have silenced the accusers and dismissed them with the censure they deserved. He did not do so because he dared not. The Jews perceived the judge's weakness and took advantage of it, driving him to extremes by their clamours, and obtaining through importunity that which conscience had not permitted him to grant. They succeeded only too well.

(1) Luke, xxiii, 5.

APPLICATIONS. This is the way our sworn enemy the devil acts. The moment he sees us hesitate timidly between God and man, or between conscience and our passions, he profits by this first weakness and redoubles his audacity. He deafens us by his clamour, and terrifies us by every imaginable difficulty, and does not rest until he makes us consent to do evil. Warned by Pilate's misfortune, let us distrust our weakness; let us fear the least concession to the tempter; let us vigorously resist his first suggestions, arming ourselves as the Apostle says, *with the shield of faith* (1) and prayer.

COLLOQUY. With Jesus Christ who became for us *the outcast of the people* (2).

THURSDAY.

JESUS INSULTED IN THE COURT OF HEROD.

I. *Prelude.* See Jesus mocked and treated as a madman in Herod's courtyard.

II. *Prelude.* Ask for grace to understand the value of any insults we have to bear for the love of Jesus Christ.

POINT I.

And when he understood that he was of Herod's jurisdiction he sent him away to Herod, who was also himself at Jerusalem in those days. And Herod seeing Jesus was very glad... for... he hoped to see some sign wrought by him (3).

CONSIDERATIONS. Herod, the coarse, vain and degraded man who had put St. John the Baptist to death, wishes and expects our Lord of whom he had heard so many wonders, to perform some miracle in his presence. Why

(1) *Ephes.*, vi, 16. — (2) *Ps.*, xxi, 7. — (3) *Luke*, xxiii, 7-8.

does he wish to witness a miracle? Is it in order to be enlightened and converted? Not at all; it is solely to gratify his vanity and curiosity. But it is not to men with dispositions such as these that God concedes extraordinary favours. He reserves them for humble souls who consider themselves unworthy of them, to those who, forgetful of self, dead to all self-love, only seek the glory of God in all things, and only ask Him for extraordinary graces or miracles in order to please Him the more, or to gain new worshippers for Him.

APPLICATIONS. Is it not because these dispositions are wholly wanting, or are imperfect in you that you receive so few extraordinary graces, and that after many years passed in the service of God, you still bear so little resemblance to the Saints, those men mighty in word and deed, whose lives you delight in reading, and whom you so much desire to resemble?

AFFECTIONS. Express the desire to understand the most secret dispositions of your heart. Renounce in the presence of God every voluntary thought, every deliberate feeling of self-love and vanity.

RESOLUTIONS. I shall strive to die more and more to self, and to keep God alone before my eyes in all things.

POINT II.

And he questioned him in many words. But he answered him nothing. And the chief priests and the scribes stood by, earnestly accusing him (1).

CONSIDERATIONS. The silence and the absolute-

(1) Luke, xxiii, 9-10.

ly passive attitude of our Divine Lord before the court and tribunal of Herod to which His trial had been submitted, are truly wonderful. He is accused of the greatest crimes, His reputation is ruined, and He could, in a few words, confound His accusers and win admiration, — but, He is silent! Through His silence, His life is in danger. Should He perform a miracle to comply with Herod's desire, the latter would instantly become His defender and protector. Yet Jesus does not perform this miracle. To rise thus above all the feelings of nature is to perform a miracle greater than that of raising the dead. But the world, like Herod's court, does not know how to appreciate this kind of miracle; it is merely looked upon as stupidity and impotence: the Just One is only a simpleton who serves as an amusement, a madman to be pitied.

APPLICATIONS. Why does Jesus act in this way on this memorable occasion? It is not only to punish Herod's pride, but also and above all, to teach and encourage us to conquer our own pride; that is to say, that inordinate desire which we all experience — almost against our will — to seek for appreciation, for notice, praise and admiration from the world, and especially from those in high places. With what strength and with what success have you fought against this unruly desire until now?

AFFECTIONS. Revere, bless and thank Jesus Christ for the example and encouragement He has given you. Ask for grace to imitate Him.

RESOLUTIONS. To confront every injustice which is inflicted on us with silence, gentleness and patience, unless charity obliges us to speak.

POINT III.

And Herod with his army set him at naught, and mocked him, putting on him a white garment, and sent him back to Pilate (1).

CONSIDERATIONS. Contemplate Jesus the King of glory, Wisdom Incarnate, treated as a fool and a madman at Herod's court. Follow Him dressed as a fool, going through the streets of Jerusalem amidst the jeerings of the populace, through the immense crowd of strangers assembled for the Feast of the Passover, and you will see that what was predicted by His prophet Jeremias is being fulfilled to the letter : *I am made a derision to all my people (2).*

APPLICATIONS. In order that this contemplation may be of great benefit to you, carefully consider that Jesus Christ is the true, the only Way that leads to eternal life, and the living representation of perfection. Then arouse an ardent desire in your heart to become like Him, to serve Him willingly, to be despised, mocked, insulted and even regarded as a madman by the enemies of God and His Church, without however giving any cause for it, so as to be like Him, and for love of Him. This is what is called the holy foolishness of the Cross. Many of God's servants have reached this point, why should you not follow in their footsteps?

COLLOQUY. With the Blessed Virgin, on whom descend the insults proffered to her Divine Son.

(1) Luke, xxiii, 11. — (2) *Lam.*, iii, 14.

FRIDAY.

BARABBAS COMPARED TO JESUS

AND PREFERRED TO HIM.

I. *Prelude.* Imagine Jesus Christ compared with a notorious malefactor before all the people.

II. *Prelude.* Ask for grace never to hesitate between God and creatures.

POINT I.

They therefore being gathered together, Pilate said (1)... But you have a custom that I should release one unto you at the pasch (2) whom will you that I release to you, Barabbas, or Jesus that is called Christ (3)?

CONSIDERATIONS. Pilate recognised and proclaimed the innocence of Jesus; his conscience was reluctant to condemn Him, but his interests counselled him to temporise with the Jews, who could bring about his ruin at the court of Caesar. Placed in this way between his conscience and his temporal interests, he again has recourse to a policy which is wholly worldly. The first, which was to remit the judgment to Herod, not having succeeded, he thinks he has found one which will be infallible. This is to force the people to choose between a malefactor whom they hated, and Jesus who, until these last few days, had received all their sympathy. But the cowardly praetor's hope is again deceived. The next expedients or half-measures to which he will successively have recourse will give no better result; and ever shrinking back from doing his duty, he will end by sharing the

(1) Matt., xxvii, 17. — (2) John, xviii, 39. — (3) Matt., xxvii, 17.

crime of putting the innocent to death, and thus lose his own soul.

APPLICATIONS. We see by this how true the saying of Jesus Christ is : *No man can serve two masters* (1). No man can compromise between God and the world, between virtue and passion, however slight this may be. A friendship too ardent or too sensitive ; a taste for a frivolous and sensational kind of reading, or for certain company and certain intimacies, may cause you uneasiness of conscience and frequent perplexities ; your confessor and your own good sense tell you to be firm, to renounce them altogether. No, you say, that is too much to expect, but henceforth I shall be more cautious, I shall be less free in my choice of reading etc. These are the deceitful expedients of self-indulgence which have no decisive end. This is but one example chosen amongst many. — Your own experience will be able to tell you more. Consult it in all seriousness.

AFFECTIONS. I shall ask for grace to be ever able to say truthfully : My God, I love Thee with all my heart, without reserve or hesitation.

RESOLUTIONS. To apply the maxim which is current in the world, to the practice of perfection : *Maladies are not cured, battles are not won, nothing great is done, by half-measures.*

POINT II.

But the chief priests and ancients persuaded the people that they should ask Barabbas, and make Jesus away (2). *The whole multitude together cried out saying : Away with this man and release unto us Barabbas* (3).

CONSIDERATIONS. Try to comprehend if you

(1) Matt., vi, 24. — (2) Matt., xxvii, 20. — (3) Luke, xxiii, 18.

can, to what extremes the outrages and degradations are carried to which Jesus is subjected. He is put on an equality and, so to speak, weighed in the balance with Barabbas, with the greatest criminal the prisons of Judea contain; and this is done by the chief magistrate of the nation, before all the assembled people. And who will be preferred? O! the extreme injustice on the one hand, and the infamy on the other! An anomaly of ingratitude which strikes Pilate himself with amazement. Barabbas is preferred to Jesus by the unanimous cry of the people! The whole multitude, says the Gospel text, together cried out, saying : *Away with this man, and release unto us Barabbas* (1).

APPLICATIONS. After that, which of us will dare to complain that we are not appreciated according to our merits, that we are neglected and set aside? On the contrary, let us consider that too often we have imitated the Jews in our lives by allowing sin to supersede the Lord our God in our hearts and we shall account ourselves unworthy of sharing in His gifts; we shall be only too glad to be counted amongst His servants, to be able to work and suffer for Him. What do you think of this?

AFFECTIONS. In accordance with these last thoughts.

RESOLUTIONS. To consider that we deserve all the want of respect to which we may be subjected.

(1) Luke, xxiii, 18.

POINT III.

And as he was sitting in the place of judgment, his wife sent to him saying : Have thou nothing to do with that just man : for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of him (1).

CONSIDERATIONS. Most interpreters think that this uneasiness of Pilate's wife was sent by the Holy Spirit for her salvation. It is believed that she was saved. The Greeks even honour her as a saint under the name of Claudia Procula. Be that as it may, the warning which Pilate received was for him a remarkable grace in that critical and decisive moment when he was hesitating between performing a great act of justice which would have saved him, and an atrocious crime which was to bring about his ruin both in this world and in the next. It is known that he was disgraced and banished, and that he died by his own hand.

APPLICATIONS. How often, and in how many ways have your guardian angel and your confessor warned you, roused you to do good, or cautioned you against evil at a time when passion has taken possession of you, darkened your understanding, and made you hesitate between good and evil? These also are remarkable graces. How have you corresponded to them? What benefit have you gained from them?

COLLOQUY. With Our Lord. — Prostrated, humbled before His infinite Majesty, beg Him to admit us amongst His most devoted and faithful servants. We shall be only too happy to have the last place amongst them.

(1) Matt., xxvii, 19.

SATURDAY.

PILATE ENDEAVOURS TO SAVE JESUS
FROM THE FURY OF THE JEWS.

I. *Prelude.* Hear Pilate speaking to the multitude in favour of Jesus.

II. *Prelude.* Ask for grace to persevere in the right way.

POINT I.

*Pilate saith to them : What shall I do then with Jesus?...
They say all. Let him be crucified (1).*

CONSIDERATIONS. The more Pilate endeavours to deliver Jesus out of the hands of His enemies, the more furiously determined they become on His destruction. Here a reflection presents itself which is as remarkable as it is deplorable : of the three kinds of people who take part in this trial, Pilate, the people, and the priests, these last are clearly the most guilty. It is they who, moved by base jealousy have brought about, and introduced the trial ; they who are inciting and deceiving the people ; they who are driving the Governor to extremes by the cries of rage and intimidation which have been put by them into the mouths of the multitude. What an abuse of power ! By the holiness of their office, by the more abundant light and grace they had received, they should have been an example to the people, and they have become a scandal.

APPLICATIONS. This sad reflection once more recalls the truth of the axiom proved besides by the experience of centuries : The corruption

(1) Matt., xxvii, 22.

of the best is the worst of corruptions, an axiom which is unfortunately still confirmed in our day by dreadful sin, which is very often promoted by some who have formerly been the joy and example of Christian people ; it seems as though they wished to stifle their consciences, and to efface by a baptism of impiety, the seal of the elect which had been imprinted on them by the sacrament of regeneration. *Alas!* says the author of the *Imitation*, *such as before fed upon the bread of angels, I have seen delighted with the husks of swine* (1).

AFFECTIONS. Ask Jesus Christ to preserve you from ever abusing any of the numberless graces you have received ; from little by little forfeiting your title of Christian, increasing thereby the number of poor sinners who by losing God, lose all.

RESOLUTIONS. I shall frequently declare the resolution I have made before God to lose all rather than forfeit my right to the heavenly heritage.

POINT II.

The Governor said to them : Why what evil hath he done (2) ?

CONSIDERATIONS. That question was well chosen to open the eyes of the Jews who had gathered together against their Messiah. It reminded them of His public life, and of the signal blessings He had dispensed at every step. Besides, we can imagine that there must have been many in that multitude who had been miraculously healed of long-standing and incurable illnesses, many to whom He had

(1) Book IV, Chap. xiv. — (2) Matt., xxvii, 23.

given sight, hearing, speech, or the use of their paralysed limbs; and many more who had been possessed and troubled by demons and had been delivered by Him.

APPLICATIONS. I cannot remember ever receiving anything but graces and favours of all kinds throughout all my life from the goodness of God. This remembrance should naturally increase in me daily the love and devotion that with so much reason I owe Him. How is it then that I still am so wanting in generosity, so lukewarm in His service? — that I do not even greatly fear to offend Him by venial faults which are more or less voluntary? I will search for the cause, fight against it, and avoid it so far as is in my power.

AFFECTIONS. Detest the monstrous ingratitude of the Jews. — Mourn our own ingratitude before God.

RESOLUTIONS. I shall strive from this day to grow in fervour and generosity in God's service, in order to render love for love.

POINT III.

And he said to them the third time: ... I find no cause of death in him. I will chastise him and let him go (1).

CONSIDERATIONS. Notice the grotesque inconsistencies into which the Roman Governor falls through passion. For the third time, he declares solemnly that He who has been brought before his tribunal is not guilty, and yet he condemns Him to an ignominious and cruel punishment. By giving the people this barbarous gratification and by arousing feelings of

(1) Luke, xxiii, 22.

pity in His favour, he hopes to save Jesus from death, but he forgets that by his action he is clearing the way to the kind of death the Jews demanded, that is, crucifixion : for according to the terms of Roman law, scourging always preceded the crucifixion of the condemned.

APPLICATIONS. How many times has passion made you inconsistent also in your conduct? How many times have you, through indolence or your attachment to pleasure, acted contrary to your most determined resolutions? Have you not lost opportunities for increasing your merits for heaven, or for reducing the amount of debt which had to be paid to the Divine justice in purgatory, by omitting some act of charity, devotion, penance or mortification? You should therefore distrust your passions, and fight against them resolutely. Have you done so? What will you do in future?

COLLOQUY. With Jesus, our adorable Master and Model.

Fourth week in Lent.

SUNDAY.

THE SCOURGING OF JESUS CHRIST.

I. *Prelude.* See Jesus bound to the column.

II. *Prelude.* Ask for grace to obtain the fruits experienced by the Saints from meditation on Our Lord's sufferings.

POINT I. — THE PREPARATIONS FOR THE SCOURGING.

CONSIDERATIONS. *Then therefore Pilate took Jesus and scourged Him* (1). Though innocent, Jesus heard pronounced against him the sen-

(1) John, XIX, 1.

tence of punishment by scourging which was so shameful and cruel; he was seized, and led away by the executioners towards the place of punishment. There He saw all the dreadful preparations and allowed His imagination to dwell on all the pain. What fear, what horror must have taken possession of His sensitive nature? Nevertheless, He did not hesitate to carry out His determination to suffer all this for us. He went resolutely forward.

APPLICATIONS. How different my conduct has been! How many times have I not only hesitated, but failed miserably in carrying out my resolutions, the use and also the necessity of which were so clear to me? And why? Because I allowed my imagination to get the better of me, because I exaggerated the effort and inconvenience it might cost me; for instance, to get up regularly at the hour I have determined on: to do a certain act of penance or mortification: to keep a certain position during prayer; to fulfil faithfully, a certain duty under my charge, etc.: Must I not acknowledge it?

AFFECTIONS. Yes, my Saviour, to my shame I confess it, fear alone has often made me shrink from a struggle.

RESOLUTIONS. Henceforward I shall not trust to my imagination which is ever a bad counsellor, when it concerns a struggle against nature. I shall only consult my duty and do it.

POINT II. — THE PUNISHMENT OF SCOURGING

CONSIDERATIONS. How terrible that pain must have been! Words and descriptions are inadequate. Nevertheless in order to form some idea

of it, imagine vividly that you are the one who has to undergo this punishment. Imagine that your clothing is torn from you, that you are bound to a pillar, and that powerful men armed with whips, thongs, and cords provided with sharp iron points are striking you until their arms drop from weariness; until your body is nothing more than one great wound, until parts of the flesh have been torn away, until the ground round you is saturated with blood. You will then have some idea of the pain caused by the scourging, endured by your Divine Saviour for you.

APPLICATIONS. In all your sufferings of soul and body, keep your eyes fixed on Jesus your King bound to the pillar, and that sight will make your own sufferings less painful. You will bear them with courage and love.

AFFECTIONS. Compassion. — Love. — Gratitude. — A desire to suffer with Jesus and for Jesus.

RESOLUTIONS. I shall try to put the Apostle's precept into practice : *I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercy of God... that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, pleasing unto God, your reasonable service* (1).

POINT III. — THE MOTIVES FOR THE SCOURGING.

CONSIDERATIONS. The scourging was a cowardly and cruel expedient. On the part of Pilate, he thought that he would be able to stir the feelings of the people, and preserve Jesus from death. On the part Our Lord it was the outcome of love carried to heroism. He wished to give

(1) *Rom.*, xii, 1.

up His Body to the tormentors, and to the most horrible sufferings, in order to expiate in His innocent flesh shameful and innumerable sins with which people of all ages and all conditions have profaned and do still profane their bodies : sins by which they dishonour and drag in the mire the image of God imprinted on their souls.

APPLICATIONS. Even if I have sinned but once grievously against purity, I should say to myself : This is my work ! It is I, who by the tormentor's hand have torn the Body of Jesus ; I who have covered it with wounds and blood. On the other hand, even if I need only reproach myself with the innumerable concessions which I still too often make to self-indulgence, it should be enough to produce in me a bitter compunction, a distrust of self, and the desire to work and suffer much for the love of Him who has been caused such terrible pain through me.

COLLOQUY. With Jesus bound to the pillar. Dwell on the affections recommended in the first two Points. Offer yourself as a victim of expiation. Renew your good resolutions.

MONDAY.

MOTIVES FOR PENANCE

OBTAINED FROM THE THOUGHT OF DEATH.

I. *Prelude.* Imagine someone like yourself lying on his death-bed.

II. *Prelude.* Ask for grace to live like a penitent so as to die like a saint.

POINT I. — PENANCE WILL CONSOL THE DYING CHRISTIAN.

CONSIDERATIONS. The thought which will

console us at the hour of death will be that we have lived a life of penance. Say to a dying man : Your last moment is near, my brother : all is at an end for you in this world. But be comforted, for you have filled an important part in it; you have occupied the principal posts in the State in succession : you have made a great name for yourself amongst scholars and orators; you will live on in your works and in your writings. Do you think he will find great comfort in these recollections? No. He will answer : Of what use will this be to me in eternity? Oh if I had been only a penitent of the desert rather than a mighty monarch, exclaimed Philip II of Spain, on his death-bed.

APPLICATIONS. What will in reality comfort you on your death-bed is this : to have lived as a true Christian, to have endeavoured to expiate some sins by penance, alms-giving, and by frequent and fervent use of the Sacraments, to have fulfilled your duties faithfully, and to have contributed to the good of religion and of souls according to your means.

AFFECTIONS. *Let my soul die the death of the just* (1). *Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord* (2).

RESOLUTIONS. To examine and resume with renewed ardour during this week the practices of penance undertaken on the first Monday in Lent.

POINT II. — PENANCE WILL REASSURE THE DYING CHRISTIAN.

CONSIDERATIONS. What usually grieves and alarms the Christian whose faith is alive at the

(1) *Numbers*, xxiii, 10. — (2) *Apoc.*, xiv, 13.

hour of death, is not the loss of the world's possessions, but the remembrance of past sins, and these words of the Holy Ghost : *Man knoweth not whether he be worthy of love, or hatred* (1). *Be not without fear about sin forgiven* (2). But what moral courage he will find in these other words prompted too by the Holy Ghost : *Thou... overlookest the sins of men for the sake of repentance* (3). What peace will be his at the remembrance of having avenged on himself the insult paid to God by his sin, of having discharged many of the debts contracted towards the Divine Justice by works of penance. In these thoughts St. Hilarion found weapons against the terror of death. What, my soul, he exclaimed, thou hast done penance for seventy years, and thou fearest to appear before God?

APPLICATIONS. You wish, at the hour of death, to share the trust and calmness which you admire in the Saints, even in those whose lives were not always exemplary; imitate them therefore in their penance, especially during these precious days of Lent, half of which have already passed. Spend them fervently and earnestly. Do not wait until the hour of sickness, until the time of infirmities : *Thou mayest do many good things whilst thou art well; but when thou art sick I know not what thou wilt be able to do*, says St. Thomas a Kempis (4).

AFFECTIONS and RESOLUTIONS. The same as the preceding Point.

(1) *Ecd.*, ix, 1. — (2) *Ecd.*, v, 5. — (3) *Wisdom*, xi, 21.
— (4) Book I, chap. xxiii.

POINT III. — PENANCE WILL GLADDEN THE DYING CHRISTIAN.

CONSIDERATIONS. The joy the labourer experiences on gathering in a rich harvest, causes him to forget all his past labour. The greater the work has been, and the more privations he has undergone, the greater is his joy.

APPLICATIONS. This is the image of the joy and happiness which the mortified and penitent Christian will experience when he finds that he is about to reap the fruit of his good works and his penance; about to receive the reward promised by Jesus Christ, to those who persevere until the end in His holy service. What will it be when he finds himself in possession of his reward? What joys will he then taste in remembering the past! St. Peter of Alcantara gives us some idea of it, when, appearing radiant with glory to St. Teresa, he exclaimed: « Happy penance, which has purchased for me such great glory! » In these thoughts seek for the courage and energy you require in order to live and persevere until the end in practices of Christian penance.

COLLOQUY. With St. Peter of Alcantara, whose death was made so sweet by the remembrance of the penance he had practised.

TUESDAY.

JESUS CROWNED WITH THORNS AND COVERED WITH REPROACHES.

1. *Prelude.* See Jesus seated on a block of wood, a reed in His hand, crowned with thorns, and insulted by the Roman Governor's guards.

II. *Prelude.* Ask for deep feelings of compunction and love.

POINT I. — THE BITTER RIDICULE WHICH PRECEDED
THE CROWNING WITH THORNS.

CONSIDERATIONS. The dreadful suffering of the scourging was followed by no less cruel outrages upon our Divine Lord: for Pilate's soldiers who had led Him to Herod's court, wished to add fresh insults to those He had already received. They had treated Him as a fool, they wished to crown Him as a madman, or mimic king. With this object, according to the Gospel text, *the soldiers of the governor taking Jesus into the hall, gathered together unto him the whole band; and stripping him, they put a scarlet cloak about him. And plaiting a crown of thorns, they put it upon his head, and a reed in his right hand. And bowing the knee before him, they mocked him, saying. Hail king of the Jews. And spitting upon him, they took the reed, and struck his head (1)... And they gave him blows (2).*

APPLICATIONS. Meditate carefully on all the details and on the words of this narrative, written through the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, and you will see with what truth the prophet Jeremias spoke of the Messiah: *He shall be filled with reproaches (3).* Then ask yourself: Who is treated in this way? For whom, and why? And the most tender love will be aroused in your heart.

AFFECTIONS: Wonder. — Compassion. — Love. — Shame for my sensitiveness. — The desire to share in some way in the humiliations

(1) Matt., xxvii, 27-30. — (2) John, xix, 3. —
(3) Lam., iii, 30.

which my Divine and loving Saviour endured for me.

RESOLUTIONS. To renew the determination to try to obtain self-forgetfulness and the desire to share in the humiliations of Jesus.

POINT II. — THE CRUEL PAIN OF THE CROWNING WITH THORNS.

CONSIDERATIONS. *And plaiting a crown of thorns, they put it upon his head* (1). Not only did they lay it upon his head, but they fixed it there, they drove it in by striking Him on the head with the reed, as we are distinctly told by the Gospel. Imagine, if you can, the pain your Divine Saviour must have experienced with this additional torment. Besides, how was it that He did not succumb to this overwhelming suffering added to the most cruel of scourgings? Did He perform a miracle in order to deaden the feeling of pain? No, but He performed a miracle so as not to succumb to the torments which would have killed Him, so that He might suffer what no one had ever suffered, or could ever suffer. And all this for love of me!

APPLICATIONS. Why did Our Divine Lord desire that His head which had been spared in the scourging, should have its own particular suffering? In order to expiate by this torment, our sins of thought; so many vain thoughts, so many schemes of pride, ambition, rebellion, hatred, vengeance, impurity, injustice with which man's head is filled the moment he loses the remembrance of the Presence and Justice of God.

(1) Matt., xxvii, 29.

APPÈCTIONS. Let us commiserate the terrible sufferings of Jesus Christ, so ill-treated for love of us. Let us ask forgiveness for having contributed to His sufferings by our thoughts and sinful intentions.

RESOLUTIONS. To aspire to greater recollection, the better to watch over our thoughts, and correct our distractions.

POINT III. — THE WONDERFUL PATIENCE OF JESUS.

CONSIDERATIONS. Reflect on the invariable patience with which Jesus bore the sufferings and outrages which had been unequalled hitherto. In Caiphas' house His eyes were blindfolded when He was insulted as a prophet or seer; but here nothing hides the insulting derision from His eyes. He sees the derisive homage which the soldiers in turn come to offer Him; He sees them spitting on Him, He sees the insolent men raise their hands to strike His face — and nevertheless He makes no movement to avoid the blows. When they take the reed from His hands, He gives it up; when they give it back to Him, He receives it again; fulfilling the prophecy of Isaias to the letter : *I have not turned away my face from them that rebuked me, and spit upon me* (1).

APPLICATIONS. When you contemplate this invariable patience of Jesus, what should you think of your sensitiveness, and impatience of the least contradiction? What should you think of your secret but ardent anxiety for the praise and adulation of the world? What should you

(1) *Isaias*, L, 6.

think of the resentment you bear and perhaps maintain against those who have offended or humiliated you? *Ah, if Jesus, reputed as nothing amongst men, were always before thy mind, thou wouldst rather seek to be under all, than to have command over so much as one*, say the *Imitation*; Your most fervent desire would be to be despised and to suffer for the love of Jesus. Can you find any of these holy and sublime desires of the true disciples of Jesus Christ in your own heart?

COLLOQUY. With the angels, witnesses of the terrible sufferings and cruel injuries inflicted on Jesus

WEDNESDAY.

PILATE SHOWS JESUS TO THE PEOPLE, SAYING :

ECCE HOMO — BEHOLD THE MAN.

I. *Prelude.* See Jesus covered with blood and wounds bearing a crown of thorns on His head, a purple cloak on His shoulders, and a reed in His hand, exposed thus to the view of the multitude.

II. *Prelude.* Ask for grace to love and glorify Jesus Christ all the more because was ill-treated and insulted.

POINT I

Jesus therefore came forth, bearing the crown of thorns and the purple garment, and he said to them : Behold the man (1)!

CONSIDERATIONS. The sight of Jesus, covered with blood and wounds in the humiliating aspect of a mimic king moved the heart of the Roman Governor with compassion. He thought that

(1) John, xix, 5.

the Jews, on seeing Him would be equally moved, and that they would demand the release of Him whose death they had asked for. For this reason he had Him brought on to the steps before the palace; and from there, showing Him to the populace, he said : *Behold the man !*

APPLICATIONS. The Church also addresses these words to you to-day, devout soul, so that you may sympathise tenderly with the sufferings and humiliations of her Divine Spouse. Are you not touched even to tears at this sight, you whose sins have brought Jesus to the state in which you see Him? These words are also spoken to you by the Eternal Father, so that your heart may be inflamed with love for His Divine Son, so terribly disfigured for you.

AFFECTIONS. *Pater misericordiarum, Deus... respice in faciem Christi tui... et miserere mei. Behold, O God our protector : and look on the face of thy Christ (1), Have mercy on me (2).*

RESOLUTIONS. To say this prayer often at the Elevation of the Sacred Host during Mass. Arouse in your heart at that moment the desire to resemble Jesus Christ, who was made the derision and as it were, the outcast of the world ; or at least form the wish to experience that desire.

POINT II.

When the chief priests therefore, and the servants had seen him, they cried out saying : Crucify him, crucify him (3).

CONSIDERATIONS. Pilate, on showing Jesus so

(1) Ps. LXXXIII, 10. — (2) Ps. I., 3. — (3) John, XIX, 6.

cruelly scourged, as a spectacle to the populace, deemed it unnecessary to rouse pity for Him in many words; he was content with saying : *Behold the man*, as he felt certain that from all sides there would be raised a cry of pardon and pity. It would have been so doubtless if he had not had to deal with men incited by the princes of the people, and the doctors of the law, themselves full of implacable hatred. Wounded in their pride and self-love, they had sworn the destruction of Jesus, even if it should, by the shedding of innocent blood, the blood of their Messias, draw down on themselves and their countrymen the most dire calamities. Pilate to his great astonishment again heard the cry of rage and death : *Crucify him, crucify him!*

APPLICATIONS. See to what lengths passion can go after having reached a certain point. It blinds men, otherwise enlightened, to their own interests, even extinguishing all sense of justice, every fear of God in their hearts. Try to prove to that young girl, who is madly in love, that he whom she trusts with such perfect hope will make her sin before God, that with him she will be the most unhappy of wives; she will not understand you, she will not be convinced. Speak to that voluptuary, to that slave of drink, about religion, honour, about all the most affecting things, he will remain deaf to your arguments; it will all be useless. Passion does not reason; it blinds and hardens the heart. Would to God that there were not so many sad examples to confirm the truth of these dreadful reflections!

AFFECTIONS. Ask for knowledge and distrust of self.

RESOLUTIONS. To resist the first impressions and smallest impulses of passion vigorously, especially pride and luxury.

POINT III.

*Pilate saith to them : Take him you, and crucify him...
The Jews answered him : We have a law ; and according
to the law he ought to die, because he made himself the
Son of God (1).*

CONSIDERATIONS. The only real crime of Jesus in the eyes of the chief priests and Jewish doctors was that of having exposed their hypocrisy, and of having humiliated them by the superiority of His teaching, by the holiness of His life, and the brilliance of His miracles. But they carefully refrained from alleging this so-called crime so as not to expose the basest of passions, the envy which devoured them.

APPLICATIONS. This is and ever will be the method adopted by our passions. It hides the real motive which causes it to act, and falls back on the fictitious injustice of others. If we were to believe that child who rebels against his parents, all the injustice is on their side ; they are prejudiced, unintelligent or unjust ; as for him, it is a legitimate regard for his honour and his rights which compels him to act as he does. But in reality, what is the cause of his want of respect and submission ? It is wounded self-love or unbridled love of independence, of entire and absolute liberty. God preserve you from being a victim of passion to this extent.

COLLOQUY. With Jesus, our Divine Master and Teacher.

(1) John, XIX. 6-7.

THURSDAY.

THE LAST EXAMINATION OF JESUS.

FEAR AND WEAKNESS OF PILATE.

I. *Prelude.* See the humble but resolute composure of Jesus before Pilate who is cowed and pusillanimous before the assembled Jews.

II. *Prelude.* Ask for grace never to give way to any fear except the fear of God.

POINT I.

He ought to die because he made himself the Son of God. When Pilate therefore had heard this saying, he feared the more (1).

CONSIDERATIONS. This last accusation of the Jews : *He made himself the Son of God*, far from making Jesus more guilty in the Governors's eyes, gave him the prescience of a mystery and filled him with terror. Every thing unusual and superhuman that he had observed in the words and aspect of Jesus, aroused the suspicion in his mind that this so-called guilty man might well be in reality the Son of a God; not however as faith shows Him to us, but as the mind of a pagan might conceive Him. Was it not natural therefore that he should be afraid of incurring His vengeance?

APPLICATIONS. Pilate was troubled, and overcome with fear merely at the thought that he was perhaps in the presence of God, and that he exposed himself to committing a crying iniquity against Him. He no longer dared to proceed with the trial without first knowing the truth. And we who know and firmly believe

(1) John, xix, 7-8.

that we are always in the presence of God Who witnesses our most secret thoughts, what have we done? We have not been afraid of insulting Him, of committing all kinds of iniquities in His sight in spite of His warnings, and in spite of the terrible results of the numerous examples related in the Holy Scriptures.

AFFECTIONS. Astonishment at the sight of our rashness and blindness.

RESOLUTIONS. I wish to dedicate myself ever more and more carefully to living in the presence of God, and being attentive to the warnings of my conscience.

POINT II.

And he entered into the hall again, and he said to Jesus.

Whence art thou? But Jesus gave him no answer. Pilate therefore saith to him: Speakest thou not to me? Knowest thou not that I have power to crucify thee, and I have power to release thee? Jesus answered: Thou shouldst not have any power against me, unless it were given thee from above. Therefore he that hath delivered me unto thee hath the greater sin (1).

CONSIDERATIONS. By putting that question : *Whence art thou?* Pilate did not intend to ascertain the birthplace of Jesus Christ, for he knew it, but His origin or genealogy. The answer to that question would have necessitated the explanation from Our Lord of the ineffable mystery of His eternal generation and Incarnation. Pilate's evil dispositions made him unworthy of receiving it. No answer of any kind was given. God the Saviour only reveals His mysteries to humble and pure souls. This is why He only reprimands the pride and presump-

(1) John, XIX, 9-11.

tion of the unfaithful judge by telling him that the power he wields comes solely from God; and by denouncing him, although indirectly and with wonderful gentleness, for the crime which he is about to commit through abusing that power.

APPLICATIONS. Do you know why God does not speak to you in prayer? Why He gives you such a small portion of His Divine Light? It is because you are not prepared to listen to Him, or perhaps because you misuse the power which has been given you by God to choose between good and evil, by your continual infidelities.

AFFECTIONS. I shall humbly ask for the necessary light to see with what I must reproach myself in regard to these points, and for the necessary strength to amend effectually.

RESOLUTIONS. To prepare my heart for prayer by humility and compunction added to great confidence.

POINT III.

And from henceforth Pilate sought to release him. But the Jews cried out saying: If thou releases this man, thou art not Cæsar's friend. For whosoever maketh himself a king, speaketh against Cæsar (1).

CONSIDERATIONS. This last threat of the Jews succeeded in destroying the last vestige of good will and justice in the cowardly Governor's heart. The fear of losing the good graces of a mortal prince prevailed over the light of his reason, over justice, over the reproach of his conscience, even over the fear of incurring

(1) John, XIX, 12.

Divine vengeance. His understanding was disturbed; his heart failed, he ended by giving way and delivered Jesus to those who asked for His death.

APPLICATIONS. There is no one who does not detest Pilate's criminal cowardice, and nevertheless how great still is the number of Christians in our day who imitate him, who act against their conscience, and betray their most sacred duties through human respect or from fear of losing some temporal advantage. Does it not happen that you also do or omit certain things through human respect? In this matter fear the first concessions: they sometimes lead us far. From concession to concession we reach extremes, even crimes and all that is lowest and most revolting in crime. Pilate supplies us with the proof of it. See moreover what takes place around you: do you not witness innumerable sins caused through human respect or interest? Be not without fear therefore, without distrust of self.

COLLOQUY. With the Mother of Jesus who must have known the wicked plots against the honour and life of Her Divine Son.

FRIDAY.

JESUS UNJUSTLY CONDEMNED TO THE PUNISHMENT
OF THE CROSS.

HIS RESIGNATION.

I. *Prelude.* See Jesus delivering Himself up to those who unjustly condemn Him, and accepting His cross.

II. *Prelude.* Ask for victory over your passions.

POINT 1.

He saith to the Jews : Behold your king.... Shall I crucify your king ? The chief-priests answered : We have no king but Cæsar (1). And Pilate seeing that he prevailed nothing (2) gave sentence that it should be as they required (3). And delivered him to them to be crucified (4).

CONSIDERATIONS. Never did a judge pronounce a more obviously unjust sentence ; he condemned to death, as the worst of malefactors, Him whose innocence he had four times solemnly declared. How is it that wretched Pilate reached this point of excessive cowardice and injustice, in spite of his good intentions and natural sincerity ? We have seen that it was through want of resolution and strength in withstanding temptation from the beginning. *For he knew*, says the Gospel, *that for envy they had delivered him (5).*

APPLICATIONS. There is nothing more dangerous than making a first concession to evil. Usually, this first concession is followed by many others, and too often we are led on to extremes which we should formerly have thought of with horror. This explains how sometimes religious people, men noted for their intelligence and good will, who had been for long the edification and consolation of the Church have become a scandal and grief to her. At the beginning, they only intended to make some concessions to wounded self-love or to self-indulgence ; but passion ended by blinding them and making them its victims.

AFFECTIONS. Give thanks to God for not hav-

(1) John, xix, 14-15. — (2) Matt., xxvii, 24. (3) Luke, xxiii, 24. — (4) John, xix, 16. — (5) Matt., xxvii, 18.

ing fallen a victim to certain passions which you have encouraged rather than combatted vigorously.

RESOLUTIONS. To withstand the first demands of passion resolutely according to the axiom : *Resist from the beginning.*

POINT II.

Pilate... taking water washed his hands before the people, saying : I am innocent of the blood of this just man, look you to it. And the whole people answering, said : His blood be upon us, and upon our children (1).

CONSIDERATIONS. When those who are entrusted with maintaining law and order fail in their duty, the consequences are usually as fatal to their subordinates as to themselves. We have the proof of it here. If Pilate, from the moment he realised the innocence of Jesus, had fulfilled his duty, laying on the slanderers the blame they deserved, and had restored Jesus, fully vindicated, to the affection of the people, they would never have participated in the crime of the envious chief-priests, and would never have pronounced against themselves that terrible imprecation, the penalty of which they yet bear after more than nineteen centuries : *His blood be upon us and upon our children.*

APPLICATIONS. Let us therefore put away from us for ever, every thought and every feeling of bitterness against our superiors, our parents, or our directors when they keep us to our duty of submission with wise firmness ; when they reprove our defects, and when, in cases of necessity, they strongly oppose the first demands of our unruly inclinations. Would

(1) Matt., xxvii, 24-25.

it not be to disregard our true interests if we acted otherwise? Would we not imitate patients who are angry with their doctor when he prescribes bitter but indispensable remedies?

AFFECTIONS. Rejoice in the Lord that you have enlightened guides who carefully and faithfully warn and correct you. Show by your docility that you are grateful to them. Pray for them.

RESOLUTIONS. When I feel humiliated by a reproof I shall say with holy King David : *It is good for me that thou hast humbled me* (1).

POINT III.

Jesus left the prætorium bearing his own cross (2).

CONSIDERATIONS. St. Peter in his first Epistle points out to us the perfect submission of will with which Jesus accepted the pain which Pilate inflicted on Him, even though it was so unjust and unmerited. *He.... delivered himself to him that judged him unjustly* (3). This was because He regarded it as being laid on Him, on account of the sins of the world by God His Father, who makes use of the malice and scorn of men for the accomplishment of His designs. Here His designs were the reparation of His glory, and the redemption of the world, which the death of His Divine Son would accomplish superabundantly. There was nothing the Son had more at heart; from His birth He longed for the time to come to fulfil it. Judge by this the eagerness and joy with which He burdened His shoulders with the heavy load of the cross.

APPLICATIONS. By His example Jesus teaches us how to regard the persecutions and maltreat-

(1) Ps. cxviii, 71. — (2) John, xix, 17. — (3) I Petr., ii, 23.

ment to which just people are sometimes subjected, and how we ourselves should receive humiliations and crosses wherever they come from. We sometimes find resignation difficult. But the thought of Our Lord, Himself bearing the instrument of His Passion, will make it easy for us; we may even come to regard it as a glory and happiness to be able to carry our cross like our Divine Saviour.

COLLOQUY. With Jesus the pattern and King of martyrs:

SATURDAY.

JESUS FALLS UNDER THE WEIGHT OF THE CROSS.

SIMON CARRIES IT AFTER HIM.

I. *Prélude.* See Jesus falling three times under the weight of the Cross.

II. *Prélude.* Ask for grace constantly to follow Jesus in the path of suffering and humiliation.

POINT I.

And the soldiers led him into the court.... And after they had mocked him, they took off the purple from him, and put his own garments on him, and they led him out to crucify him.... into the place called Golgotha, which being interpreted is, the place of Calvary... And with him they crucify two thieves (1).

CONSIDERATIONS. In all the circumstances mentioned here, observe how your Divine Saviour craves not only for sufferings, but also for humiliations and obloquy. He desires to submit to the shameful death of the Cross in the place where the greatest criminals were executed, in company with two of them clothed, not with

(1) Mark, xv, 16, 20, 22, 27.

other garments which would render Him less recognisable, but with His own garments in which He had always been seen, and which He wore on the day of His triumphant entry into Jerusalem.

APPLICATIONS. What does our Divine Master teach us here, we who glory in being His disciples? He teaches us not to be ashamed, but on the contrary to glory in bearing His livery; that is to say, in participating in the mockery, scorn, disdain, insults and persecutions we suffer for His name, rejoicing in thus bearing a greater resemblance to Him.

• What are your feelings, desires or your fears on this subject?

AFFECTIONS. O Jesus! regarded as the least of men for love of me, teach me to regard myself, and to desire to be regarded as the least of Thy servants.

RESOLUTIONS. To endeavour to say with the great Apostle : *God forbid that I should glory, save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ; by whom the world is crucified to me, and I to the world* (1).

POINT II.

And as they led him away, they laid hold of one Simon of Cyrene coming from the country, and they laid the cross on him to carry after Jesus (2).

CONSIDERATIONS. Jesus worn out and exhausted by fasting, by the numerous journeys He had been forced to take from the time He delivered Himself up to His enemies, and above all, by the Blood which He lost in His Agony and in the scourging, falls under the heavy

(1) *Gal.*, vi, 14. — (2) *Luke*, xxiii, 26.

weight of the Cross. According to tradition, He fell as many as three times, His strength exhausted. The first and second time He got up after having recovered some of His strength during a momentary halt; but at the third fall the Jews, fearing that He would die on the way, and that they would be deprived of the inhuman satisfaction of seeing Him die on the Cross, forced Simon to help Him to carry it to the summit of Calvary.

APPLICATIONS. A very natural reflection which comes to us here is one of astonishment that no one came forward to help Our Lord to carry His Cross; not one, even amongst those who had been miraculously healed by Him, and who in their innermost hearts, acknowledged Him as their Messias. This abandonment must have greatly intensified the grief of such a sensitive Heart as that of Jesus. But do we not renew this trial ourselves when we refuse to follow Jesus Christ in the path of suffering and humiliation by allowing ourselves to be deterred through unfounded fear or human respect?

AFFECTIONS. Shame — Sorrow. — The offering of ourselves without reserve.

RESOLUTIONS. Often to excite ourselves to generosity.

POINT III.

And they forced one Simon, a Cyrenian... the father of Alexander and of Rufus, to take up his cross (1).

CONSIDERATIONS. It seems from these words that Simon at first showed great reluctance to carry the Cross of Jesus. This can be understood,

(1) Mark, xv, 21.

but the care and precision with which the Evangelist transmits to posterity his name and that of his two sons, leads us to believe that enlightened by Divine grace regarding his privilege, he carried the Cross as a worthy disciple of Jesus Christ, and that he with his two sons were rewarded magnificently. According to a tradition generally admitted, all three became celebrated in the Church as either bishops or as martyrs.

APPLICATIONS. Let us renew our esteem and love of the Cross by remembering all the glory and happiness it commends: *In the Cross is salvation, says the Author of the Imitation, in the Cross is life, in the Cross is protection from thine enemies; infusion of heavenly sweetness; strength of mind; joy of spirit; height of virtue and the perfection of holiness. Courage therefore, my brethren, here is your King who goes before thee carrying His Cross; let us follow Him, ready to die in the conflict; death will be life for us (1).*

COLLOQUY. With Simon of Cyrene.

Fifth week in Lent.

SUNDAY.

JESUS MOURNED BY THE HOLY WOMEN

AND MET

BY HIS MOTHER ON HIS SORROWFUL JOURNEY.

I. *Prelude.* See the holy women, and especially the Blessed Virgin His Mother, amongst the crowds collected to see Jesus pass by.

II. *Prelude.* Ask for the grace of tender compassion.

(1) *Imitation*: Book II Chap. xii.

POINT I.

*And there followed him a great multitude of people,
and of women who bewailed and lamented him (1).*

CONSIDERATIONS. It does not say that all those who followed Our Lord were filled with the same compassion and love as the holy women. Many, perhaps the greater number, without mentioning the enemies of Jesus, followed the mournful procession merely out of idle curiosity, and were quite indifferent to the fate of Him who was going to die for them.

APPLICATIONS. Even now, during this holy season of Lent, there are a great many who follow in spirit the different phases of the sorrowful Passion of Jesus Christ. Perhaps you have the advantage of being able to do it with greater quietness and leisure than most Christians. But during these precious moments of meditation and contemplation on the sufferings of your loving Saviour, what are your impressions, what are your feelings? Are you at this time like the holy women, touched with compassion, inflamed with love, full of sorrow and contrition at the thought that it is on account of your sins and for love of you that Jesus suffers and is going to die?

AFFECTIONS. Ask Jesus earnestly that He may deign to teach you Himself how to meditate on His sorrowful Passion, as He has taught some privileged souls, and that He may enable you to find like them, an inexhaustible source of

(1) Luke, xxiii, 27.

tender sorrow and an ever increasing love therein.

RESOLUTIONS. To redouble our efforts to meditate well on the Passion as the end of Lent approaches.

POINT II.

*And there followed him women who bewailed
and lamented him (1).*

CONSIDERATIONS. Although St. Luke, in speaking of these compassionate women, makes no special mention of the Mother of Jesus, we believe in accordance with an unbroken tradition, that the Son and His Mother met on the road, particularly as St. John says explicitly that His Mother was on Calvary, at the end of the sorrowful journey. Who could ever express the feelings and the anguish of heart of this Mother, the most loving and tender of Mothers, when making her way through the crowd, she came suddenly face to face with Her Divine Son so cruelly disfigured, covered with bruises, His head pierced with thorns, covered with blood and wounds, surrounded by soldiers and executioners who shouted imprecations at Him, and dragged Him away to death?

APPLICATIONS. God willed that this terrible anguish should afflict the heart of the Blessed Virgin, so that she, of all the Saints, might have the greatest share in the Passion of her Son, and in the work of our Redemption, and that in this way she should amass greater treasures of merit and sanctity than could be

(1) Luke, xxiii, 27.

amassed by all who have yet lived or who shall live until the end of the world. Do not wonder, do not complain, and above all, do not get discouraged in any way if God sends you many sorrows and trials; believe rather that He does so to afford you an opportunity of growing in His love and increasing your merit.

AFFECTIONS. Sympathise with the unspeakable sorrows of Jesus and Mary. Offer them to God the Father for the salvation of the world, for the conversion of sinners, as a satisfaction for your own sins.

RESOLUTIONS. To be glad to have to endure sometimes, frequently or perhaps usually, inward trials in fulfilling your duties.

POINT III.

Jesus turning to them said : Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not over me, but weep for yourselves and for your children (1).

CONSIDERATIONS. Admire the magnanimity and tenderness of the Heart of Jesus. He forgets all His own sufferings, He forgets Himself in order to lavish His care on others; in order to warn them of the evils with which they are threatened, and to implore them to escape while there is yet time, by tears of repentance and works of penance.

APPLICATIONS. How far you are from this magnanimity and boundless charity! When you are suffering in body or mind, do you not often forget your duties to others? You wish every

(1) Luke, **xxiii**, 28.

one to take an interest in you and pity you; and if you see that this is not the case, you give way to bad temper and discontent. Keep the thought of Jesus before you, and you will be more unselfish, more self-forgetful, more attentive to the needs of others, and you will make it a rule never to allow any one to suffer on your account.

COLLOQUY. With our Blessed Lady who meets her Divine Son on the sorrowful journey, going to His death for us, His strength exhausted, breathless under the weight of the Cross, His soul stricken at the sight of His Mother who is the prey to untold sorrows, abandoned, deserted by those who were most beholden to Him.

MONDAY.

MOTIVES FOR PENANCE

DRAWN FROM THE THOUGHT OF JUDGMENT.

I. *Prelude.* I will imagine myself standing before the judgment seat of God to be judged.

II. *Prelude.* I will ask for grace to know myself and prove myself now according to the Apostle's advice (1).

POINT I

CONSIDERATIONS. The judgment we shall undergo on leaving this world will be trebly formidable, by reason of the person of the Judge, the account to be rendered, and the sen-

(1) 1 *Corin.*, xi, 28.

tence. By penance we can make the Judge favourable to us. He who will judge us is Jesus Christ. He is God Whom we have ignored, offended, insulted by the inherent malice of sin so often, with such recklessness — before His eyes — even when He overwhelmed us with benefits. Now He is the God of Mercy, ever attentive to the least signs of repentance in order to pardon us; but then He will only be the God of Justice and vengeance. His mercies were infinite; His Justice will also be infinite. He has said that the least fault such as *every idle word* (1), will not pass unnoticed, nor remain without punishment. These thoughts filled saintly Job with salutary fear : *What shall I do, he said, when God shall rise to judge* (2).

APPLICATIONS. What can you hope for or rather fear from your Judge, you who have lived for long in a state of indifference, the special property of which is to blind man regarding the number and gravity of his infidelities, and to keep him in false security? What then must we do? Our Lord informs you : *Be at agreement with thy adversary betimes whilst thou art in the way with him* (3). That is to say, with God who must judge you, and whose enemy you have made yourself by sin, according to St. Augustine's interpretation. You can do it : *Be you humbled therefore, under the mighty hand of God*, says the Prince of the Apostles (4), and *Be penitent* (5), says St. Luke.

(1) Matt. XII, 36 — (2) Job, XXXI, 14 — (3) Matt., v, 25.
— (4) 1 Peter, v, 6. — (5) Acts, III, 19

AFFECTIONS. Humbly acknowledge your infidelities and ingratitude. Repent and offer to do sincere penance for them.

RESOLUTIONS. To persevere in the practices of penance and mortification which we undertook on the first Monday in Lent.

POINT II.

CONSIDERATIONS. By penance we can lighten the account we shall have to render. It will be a severe account, for He from Whom nothing is hidden will examine everything : the time lost in vain and futile things; the good left undone; the good ill-done; all our thoughts, our intentions, our words, our actions, and what is most terrible for us who are Catholics, all the means of salvation and sanctification lavishly bestowed on us every day and every hour. St. Cyprian says : The judgment will be severe in proportion to the graces received, founding his words on those of Our Lord : *Unto whom soever much is given, of him much shall be required* (1).

APPLICATIONS. The thought that they had never done enough to atone for their past, filled the penitents of the desert with fear and even with terror. The only means of consolation under this dread, was in tears and severest penance, of penance continued until death. Imitate them. Try to lighten by a life of penance and mortification, the heavy account of your sins, faults and negligences. Do it with parti-

(1) Luke, xii, 48.

cular generosity during this holy time of atonement and general penance, especially as two thirds of it have already passed.

AFFECTIONS. *Turn away thy face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities* (1).

RESOLUTIONS. The same as that of the preceding Point.

POINT III.

CONSIDERATIONS. By penance we can insure a favourable sentence. The sentence which the Judge will pronounce will be irrevocable : a sentence of eternal life or death. Through the first, the ineffable glory and the joys of heaven will be assured for ever to the soul of the just, although it may remain excluded temporarily, detained in a place of expiation. Through the second sentence, the soul of the impenitent sinner will be delivered to Satan, to suffer the eternal punishment of hell.

APPLICATIONS. You earnestly desire to be amongst the elect, and even amongst the privileged souls who enter into the immediate possession of the joys of heaven after leaving the world. This is possible with the grace of God. Try to live as a fervent Christian and to efface the stains which are yet on your soul by continual penance and mortifications. It is the only effectual means for insuring the fulfilment of your desires. O! what joy you will feel at the hour of death for having lived such a life! Why then do you not do it?

COLLOQUY. With Jesus doing penance for us.

(1) *Ps. l., 11.*

TUESDAY.

JESUS ON MOUNT CALVARY.

HE IS GIVEN GALL TO DRINK AND IS STRIPPED
OF HIS GARMENTS.

I. *Prelude.* See Jesus amongst His executioners, who strip Him of His garments.

II. *Prelude.* Ask for grace to grow in the love of Jesus, Who suffers in so many ways, and with so much love for you.

POINT I.

And they came to the place that is called Golgotha, which is the place of Calvary (1).

CONSIDERATIONS. There are many mysteries connected with this place chosen by the Son of God for the consummation of His sacrifice. It is the same that God assigned to the patriarch Abraham for the sacrifice of his son Isaac; the same that the Jews had selected for executing great criminals; where, according to Jewish tradition, Noah buried Adam's head which he had taken with him in the ark, whence came the hebrew name of *Golgotha*, which signifies skull. The care with which the four Evangelists cite the Hebrew name word for word, instead of the latinised Greek «Cranium», the place of *Calvary*, seems to authorise the tradition. It was accepted as incontestable amongst the Jews as is attested by Tertullian, Origen, St. Athanasius, and most of the Early Fathers of the Church.

APPLICATIONS. Meditate on these mysteries ;

(1) Matt., xxvii, 33.

they contain useful instruction. Jesus, by reminding us of the sacrifice of Abraham and Isaac, should inspire us with love and gratitude towards His Father and Himself for having fulfilled the symbolic sacrifice of the holy patriarch and his son. By choosing a place intended for the execution of criminals, He reminds us that it is in atonement for the sins of the whole world, for each one of us that He dies; and by dying on the grave where lie the ashes of our first father, He signifies that by dying, He destroys the power of death in its original source, and that He gives us back our rights to eternal life.

AFFECTIONS. Admire, praise and adore the wonderful action of Providence in circumstances which you may never have considered.

RESOLUTIONS. I will take care to see and praise the action of Providence in all the details of my life, and in all that comes daily before my notice.

POINT II.

*And they gave him wine to drink mingled with gall.
And when he had tasted he would not drink (1).*

CONSIDERATIONS. It was the custom to give wine mingled with myrrh to condemned criminals, either to fortify them, or partly to deaden their feelings by making them drowsy; but by a refinement of cruelty, the wine which was presented to Our Divine Lord was mixed with gall. He accepted the draught. He tasted it, but the Gospel says, *he would not drink*.

(1) Matt., xxvii, 34.

APPLICATIONS. Why did Jesus wish to taste this very bitter draught but not to drink it? He wished to mortify the sense of taste which the executioners had not been able to touch; to atone for our intemperance and self-indulgence in the use of food; to encourage us by His example to mortify our taste, or at least, to resist our disordered appetites, and never to exceed the bounds of Christian temperance. On the other hand, He did not wish to take this drink because He would have thus moderated the acuteness of the pain of crucifixion, all of which He wished to endure without the least alleviation.

AFFECTIONS. Ask forgiveness for your sins of gluttony and intemperance.

RESOLUTIONS. To mortify myself always in some way at meals; at least, to avoid selecting the most delicate food.

POINT III. — JESUS STRIPPED OF HIS GARMENTS.

CONSIDERATIONS. The Roman law demanded that those who were condemned to the punishment of the cross should die stripped of their garments, thus adding ignominy to the other torments. Therefore, as soon as Jesus had tasted the bitter draught presented to Him, He was stripped before the eyes of the shameless crowds, of His garments which adhered to His sacred body lacerated by the scourging, so that they could not be removed without re-opening the wounds, and causing Him indescribable pain.

APPLICATIONS. Why did Jesus wish to suffer this fresh martyrdom of ignominy, pain and

utter denudation? To atone for the innumerable sins caused by the immodest dresses worn even by devout people; as though accepted customs or fashions could justify the scandal and the loss of souls which are the result. Also to teach and encourage us, by His example, never to shrink in His service before any kind of contempt, suffering or privations, even if we should become a laughing-stock to the world, and be deprived of everything.

COLLOQUY. With the Mother of Jesus, who witnessed the terrible ill-treatment endured by her Divine Son.

WEDNESDAY.

JESUS CRUCIFIED BETWEEN TWO THIEVES.

I. *Prelude.* See Jesus lying on the Cross, and the executioners nailing Him to it with heavy blows of the hammer.

II. *Prelude.* Ask for deep feelings of compassion and compunction.

POINT I.

And it was the third hour, and they crucified him (1).

CONSIDERATIONS. Jesus has arrived at Calvary, at the place and at the time appointed from all eternity for the consummation of His sacrifice. Let us go there in spirit. What do we see? The Roman soldiers driving back the crowd, Jesus standing near an enormous wooden cross, the executioners, each holding a large nail and hammer in hand, commanding

(1) Mark, xv, 25.

the Divine Sufferer to lie down on that cruel death-bed. Jesus obeys without a word; He lies down upon the Cross; He stretches Himself upon it. He is asked for His right hand, and He gives it; immediately an executioner seizes it, lays it on the Cross, and piercing it with a thick nail, fastens it there with repeated blows of the hammer which awaken the echoes of the mountains, but from Jesus not a cry of pain, not a word of complaint!

APPLICATIONS. « *Crucifixus etiam pro nobis* » ; *He was crucified for us*. It is for me then, because of me, for love of me that Jesus endures these indescribable torments, the mere thought of which makes nature shudder. That is no doubt, the reason why the Evangelist says no more than this : *They crucified him*. Can I contemplate my Jesus nailed to the Cross and remained unmoved, or without being touched to my innermost heart, and affected to tears of love and compassion?

AFFECTIONS. I shall give full vent to these emotions. The Saints drew so much strength and so much love from them. Then I shall draw near to my loving Saviour before He is raised on the Cross, and shall kiss the precious Wounds, bestowing all the affection of my heart with my lips.

RESOLUTIONS. I will try to prove my love for Jesus by an ever greater, more generous self-abnegation and mortification, that I may be able to say with the Apostle : *With Christ I am nailed to the Cross. And I live, now not I, but Christ liveth in me* (1).

(1) *Gal.*, II, 19-20.

POINT II. — JESUS IS RAISED ON THE CROSS.

CONSIDERATIONS. To be condemned to have hands and feet nailed, outstretched on a cross until death ensues, is a terrible punishment. Nevertheless, that punishment is not sufficient for the love of Jesus, it must be increased tenfold, a hundredfold. The Cross is raised on end, placed in the rock and fixed there. Jesus remains, suspended with all the weight of His body, with no other support than the nails in His hands and feet, condemned to death through suffering. What a martyrdom! What a death! We cannot think of it without being heart-stricken. One minute passed in such torment must seem like an hour, a day; yet Jesus endured it for three long hours, and all this for my sake, for love of me!

APPLICATIONS. O Christian disciple of the Saviour, whoever you are, reflect here on your own conduct and ask yourself : first, what are and what can my sufferings, my crosses, my martyrdom ever be in comparison with the sufferings, cross, and martyrdom of my King, and my Saviour? Secondly, have I ever yet done anything great or generous for this Divine Saviour to acknowledge His excessive love? What can I do in the future for love of Him?

AFFECTIONS. Beg and implore Jesus to let you know the sacrifice He asks from you as the proof of your love and gratitude.

RESOLUTIONS. To prepare myself as soon as possible to fulfil this sacrifice, however painful it may be to nature.

POINT III.

And with him they crucify two thieves; the one on his right hand, and the other on his left. And the Scripture was fulfilled which saith : And with the wicked he was reputed (1).

CONSIDERATIONS. Jesus as the King of Martyrs, desired that His humiliations as well as His sufferings should be unparalleled, as indeed they were, by His place between two malefactors. He was regarded as the most guilty of criminals, and moreover as the most infamous impostor, accused of falsely assuming to be the Son of God. What gave a semblance of truth to this accusation was that, when challenged by the Scribes to descend from the Cross if in reality He were the Son of God, He did not descend. *If he be the King of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him (2).* For love of us Jesus dies dishonoured.

APPLICATIONS. Let us prostrate ourselves in spirit at the feet of Jesus, suspended on that ignominious Cross, between heaven and earth, reconciling the one with the other, blotting out by the Blood that flows from His Wounds, says the Apostle, *the hand-writing of the decree that was against us... fastening it to the Cross (3).* Let us repeat with devout enthusiasm, those words which the Church bids us say at every Station of the Way of the Cross : *We adore thee, O Christ, and praise thee, because by thy Holy Cross thou hast redeemed the world.*

(1) Mark, xv. 27-28. — (2) Matt., xxvii, 43. —
(3) Coloss., ii, 14.

COLLOQUY. With Jesus crucified or with His Mother standing at the foot of the Cross.

THURSDAY.

THE FIRST WORD OF JESUS

ON THE CROSS.

I. *Prelude.* Look at Jesus raised on the Cross, and hear Him saying these words : *Father forgive them, for they know not what they do* (1).

II. *Prelude.* Ask for the spirit of gentleness and charity.

POINT I.

Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.

CONSIDERATIONS. The murder of innocent Abel cried to heaven for vengeance, and vengeance did not tarry. It fell with its full weight on the murderer Cain, and on all his descendants. The Jews have just committed an infinitely more execrable murder; at last they have succeeded in nailing the Saint of Saints, Jesus their Messiah, to the instrument of His death. He is at the point of breathing His last sigh. Doubtless He is going to ask His heavenly Father for a tremendous act of justice, so that His innocence may be proved, and His enemies confounded for ever. No, this thought is far from the Heart of Jesus. Hardly has He been nailed to the Cross before He raises His eyes to heaven and says : *Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.* What a glorious example of charity !

APPLICATIONS. Jesus is your Model. You have solemnly promised so many times to walk in

(1) Luke, XXIII, 34.

His footsteps, above all to imitate His gentleness and charity. Have you done it? Observe carefully how Jesus, innocence itself, when He is horribly ill-treated, prays for His executioners; excuses them, and extenuates as much as possible, the enormity of their crime; whereas you harbour feelings of bitterness and revenge against those who have only wronged you slightly, and even aggravate these wrongs by attributing to them evil intentions they may never have entertained.

AFFECTIONS. Admire and praise the incomparable meekness and charity of Jesus Christ. Regret deeply that you have imitated Him so badly; that you have been so impatient, so hard to others.

RESOLUTIONS. So long as we are not responsible for the conduct of others, we should excuse any short comings they may have, and think that they have acted thoughtlessly or with good intentions.

POINT II.

Pilate wrote a title also, and put it upon the Cross; and the writing was : Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews. And it was written in Hebrew, in Greek, and in Latin (1).

CONSIDERATIONS. By giving Jesus the honorary title of King of the Jews, and inscribing it over the Cross in the three best known languages of that time, Pilate acted from spite and revenge against the Jews who had forced from him an unjust sentence. But at the same time he assisted unconsciously the designs of Provi-

(1) John, XIX, 19-20.

dence, for he proved the truth of these words of Jesus : *He that humbleth himself, shall be exalted* (1), and shared in the fulfilment of the prophecies which foretold that the Gospel would spread from the Hebrews to the Greeks, and Latins or Romans, and through them — through the Roman Pontiffs — to the people of all tongues and all countries.

APPLICATIONS. Observe how marvellous is the Providence of God Who knows how to make use of the perverse designs, and even the hatred and spite of evil men for His ends and for our good. We see this every day. Why, then, O my soul, is there so much want of confidence, so much vain fear in God's service? Let us above all trust in His Fatherly providence, and no one will be able to harm us. When they seek to harm us, they will do us good : *To them that love God, all things work together unto good* (2), even persecutions and the momentary triumph of the wicked.

AFFECTIONS. Adore the profound purposes of Providence.

RESOLUTIONS. To put myself wholly in every incident of my life into the hands of the most watchful and best of Fathers.

POINT III.

Pilate answered : (the chief priests who asked him to change the inscription) *What I have written, I have written* (3).

CONSIDERATIONS. The inscription which the Roman Governor placed over the Cross, wounded the pride and susceptibilities of the chief

(1) Luke, xviii, 14. — (2) Rom., viii, 28. — (3) John, xix, 22.

priests, and of the doctors of the law ; so they went to Pilate and said : *Write not, the King of the Jews ; but that he said : I am the King of the Jews* (1). Pilate who, until then, had proved so weak and timid, stands firm this time ; he refuses their imperious demand saying : *What I have written, I have written.*

APPLICATIONS. Although Pilate was a pagan, he gives you a good lesson. He teaches you not to alter your mind quickly but to persevere therein cost what it may, especially the resolutions you have made in calm moments when God's grace enlightened you in a special manner, such as during the days of a retreat which you may have had the happiness to make. Therefore, if you are tempted under some pretext (and they are never wanting) to change or abandon your resolutions, say too : *What I have written under the inspiration of grace, at a time when God spoke to my heart, must remain unaltered ; I will be faithful to it.*

COLLOQUY. With God the Father, contemplating His crucified Son.

FRIDAY

THE FEAST OF THE DOLOURS

OF THE MOST BLESSED VIRGIN.

I. *Prelude.* See Our Blessed Lady, standing by the Cross, contemplating her crucified Son.

II. *Prelude.* Ask for the grace of tender compassion with the unspeakable sorrows of our beloved Mother, and to comprehend and intimately feel how much, in what manner, and why she suffers.

(1) John, xix, 21.

POINT I. — HOW MUCH SHE SUFFERS.

CONSIDERATIONS. Let us enter into the spirit of the Church : let us fix our thoughts as she does to-day exclusively on the sorrowful compassion of the Mother of Jesus. Because of us, and for us she suffers. In order to comprehend in some measure how much she suffers, imagine a Mother, the most tender of Mothers whose sole interest in life is her Child, her only Son. She is compelled to see the most loving of the children of men, die, in the flower of life, by no natural death, but by the hands of executioners, amidst the imprecations of an entire people — to see Him nailed, hanging on a Cross — after they had lacerated all His body, and pierced His head with a crown of thorns — to see Him struggling with death in terrible suffering for three hours without being able to alleviate His agony in the least. Was there ever a Mother who bore such a martyrdom? But what passes our comprehension is that we may say she endured this martyrdom for thirty-three years, enlightened, as she was by Simeon's prophecies about the sword of sorrow which must pierce even to her soul. With justice therefore, the Church salutes Mary with the title of *Queen of Martyrs*, and applies to her these words of the Psalmist : *My life is wasted with grief : and my years in sighs* (1).

APPLICATIONS. Think of all this when your eyes meet a picture where Our Blessed Lady is represented at the foot of the Cross of Jesus, and your heart will be moved with most tender

(1) *Ps.* xxx, 11.

compassion, love and filial devotion; whatever you may have to suffer will appear but a trifle, and your courage will revive and increase with the difficulties which put it to the test.

AFFECTIONS. Reverence and compassion. — Declarations of love and filial devotion.

RESOLUTIONS. To encourage devotion to Our Lady of Dolours in yourself and others.

POINT II. — IN WHAT MANNER SHE SUFFERS.

CONSIDERATIONS. How did the Blessed Virgin bear so many and such immense sufferings? First, with perfect resignation, without uttering a word of complaint. Secondly, with entire conformity of will with all of God's designs regarding the cruel and ignominious death of her Son. Thirdly, with a generosity which seemed impossible to a Mother, for she made the glory of God and the salvation of the world prevail in her heart over the desire for the prolongation of the life of Jesus. Fourthly, with more than heroic constancy, she remained standing at the foot of the Cross of Jesus until He had drawn His last breath; and lastly, with invincible gentleness and heroic charity, she joined her Divine Son in His prayer for those who were putting Him to death.

APPLICATIONS. On this commemorative Feast, Mary is seen as the Queen and Model of Martyrs. See how far you are conformed to this wonderful Model in the sufferings you have had to endure.

AFFECTIONS. Beg and implore Mary to obtain for you the grace to sanctify all your troubles, and all your sorrows by adding the virtues which you admire in her.

RESOLUTIONS. To receive all our crosses in the spirit of faith, as coming from the hand of God for our greater good.

POINT III. — WHY SHE SUFFERS.

CONSIDERATIONS. Why should God will that Mary, though she had nothing to expiate, should nevertheless suffer throughout her whole life? The Fathers of the Church say, that to merit the title of *Queen of all Saints*, she had to surpass them all by means of her resemblance to Jesus Christ, the *Man of Sorrows* (1); — by the excellence of her love for God, a love which is proved by suffering for Him; — by the measure of her merits, the fruit of her heroic resignation; — by the number of the sacrifices she made for the glory of God, and the salvation of souls.

APPLICATIONS. If God, wishing to give Mary a pledge of privileged love, found amongst His treasures nothing more precious than the cross, can you ever consider yourself unfortunate when He gives you a share in it also, even if it be His Will that you should carry it until death? O be consoled and encouraged then with the thought that God desires to treat you as He treated her who, after His Son, was the chief object of His love, and think only of carrying your cross magnanimously like your beloved Mother. Have you thought of it in this way? Have you acted in this way?

COLLOQUY. With the Blessed Virgin, Queen of Martyrs.

(1) *Isaias*, LIII, 3.

SATURDAY.

THE PENITENT THIEF.

THE SECOND WORD OF JESUS ON THE CROSS.
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- I. *Prelude.* Jesus crucified between two thieves.
II. *Prelude.* Ask for great and ready docility to grace.

POINT I.

And one of those robbers who were hanged, blasphemed him... But the other unsuering, rebuked him saying : Neither dost thou fear God, seeing thou art under the same condemnation (1).

CONSIDERATIONS. The striking contrast between the death of the two thieves contains a great mystery and a great lesson. The mystery is this, that both are witnesses of the patience and superhuman charity of Our Lord; both have the Redeemer of the world beside them, who prays and sacrifices Himself for their salvation; and nevertheless, the one remains an impious blasphemer and dies impenitent, whilst the other, docile to grace, opens his eyes to the light, and his heart to repentance, and dies as one of the elect, a martyr baptised, as St. Cyprian says, in his own blood. The Church proposes him in her martyrology for the veneration of the faithful, under the name of Demas, on the 25th March.

APPLICATIONS. The lesson or practical instruction contained in this mystery is this : God gives to all the graces necessary to salvation, though more abundantly to some than to others. In every case however, He requires the willing co-operation of man. Consequently, however

(1) Luke, xxiii, 39-40.

superabundant the graces may have been which were granted to the penitent thief, they would neither have converted or saved him, had he not corresponded with them. What do we learn from this? That we should be very attentive and docile to the inspirations of grace, and profit by the numerous means of sanctification which are at our disposal. Do you do this? With what amount of fidelity and generosity?

AFFECTIONS. Thank God for the special favours He has granted you, and which He still grants you every day. Ask forgiveness for the many times you have abused the graces granted you.

RESOLUTIONS. To examine myself frequently on the fidelity with which I respond to the suggestions and inspirations of grace.

POINT II.

And we indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds; but this man hath done no evil. And he said to Jesus : Lord, remember me when thou shalt come into thy Kingdom (1).

CONSIDERATIONS. To acknowledge your misdeeds humbly as the penitent thief does here, and to accept chastisement with a contrite and resigned heart, united to a humble and trustful prayer, is to go straight to the heart of God, and to insure, not only His forgiveness for your sins, but also graces and special favours. The penitent thief is the proof of this, for his striking profession of belief in the Divinity of Christ. Who was then, as it were, brought to nought, proves to us that he received with the grace of justification, the gift of faith in an eminent degree.

(1) Luke, XXIII, 41-42.

APPLICATIONS. We are all frail. You sometimes have serious faults with which to reproach yourself : do you confess them with sorrow like the penitent and humble thief? Do you not on the contrary conceal them from yourself, deny or excuse them before others, and receive punishment for them unwillingly and with bad grace? What does your conscience tell you?

AFFECTIONS. Detest the pride which hinders you from knowing and amending yourself. Ask for strength to repress the impulses of self-love, too often the cause of unjustifiable or even insincere excuses.

RESOLUTIONS. I will listen to advice which is given to me in silence, with no attempt to excuse myself. I will accept corrections or reprimands humbly, and will strive to profit by them.

POINT III.

Jesus said to him : Amen I say to thee, this day thou shalt be with me in paradise (1).

CONSIDERATIONS. What a consolation must those encouraging words have been to the heart of the penitent thief at the suprême moment of death when everything combined to drive him to despair : the torture of crucifixion, the remembrance of the past, the prospect of the future ! Who will not recognise in this the efficacy of prayer, of a single prayer fervently uttered? It changes a hardened sinner into one of the Elect, into a Saint. He had only asked Our Lord to remember him, and Jesus gives him with the remission of his sins, the assu-

(1) Luke, xxiii, 43. •

rance of a holy death immediately followed by the joys of Paradise. *To-day thou shalt be with me in Paradise.*

APPLICATIONS. How wrong therefore, to distrust the goodness of God, or to doubt at any time, the efficacy of prayer, however guilty you may have been in the past or however sinful you may be at present. Prayer is powerful of its own nature, even independently of the holiness of him who utters it; therefore, we can always count and have the right to count on the efficacy of our prayers. How encouraging this is! Even when you feel incapable of uttering a prayer, say with the penitent thief : *Lord, remember me*, so poor and so wretched... You will never say it in vain.

COLLOQUY. With the penitent thief united to Jesus in Paradise.

Sixth week in Lent.

PALM SUNDAY.

JESUS ON THE CROSS,

ABANDONED, STRIPPED OF HIS GARMENTS,
BLASPHEMED.

I. *Prelude.* See Jesus recently welcomed in triumph, now nailed to the Cross, abandoned, blasphemed, cursed.

II. *Prelude.* Ask for grace to detach your heart completely from the world, that you may be attached to God alone.

POINT I.

And all his acquaintance... stood afar off (1).

CONSIDERATIONS. The unusual ceremonies which precede this Sunday's Mass, the blessing

(1) Luke, XXIII, 49.

of the palms, the procession, the joyous singing of Hosanna, are instituted by the Church as a remembrance of the triumphal entry of Christ this same day, into the city of Jerusalem. What a contrast after only six days interval, between the honours then rendered, and the depths of ignominy, of blind rage we now see completed on the Cross! Meditate on this remarkable contrast for your instruction. Six days ago, according to St. John, *a great multitude that was come to the festival day, when they had heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem... went forth to meet him* (1), providing a brilliant escort for Him to the entrance of the temple, and now that He is condemned to death, we see Him alone, abandoned, deserted by all His friends... *who stood afar off*.

APPLICATIONS. Do not rely on the friendship of men, on the help and sympathy which you have a right to expect from them, especially in times of misfortune and disgrace. Learn cheerfully to dispense with all tokens of sympathy and condolence even from your friends, and to be content with God alone as confidant of your sorrows and your sufferings. Happy the Christian who has followed this practice from his earliest years! You will not hear him bewail a lack of consideration and sympathy, for Jesus, abandoned on the Cross, will console him, and be all in all to him.

AFFECTIONS. *O Jesus, comfort of the afflicted; and strength of the weak, have mercy on me* (2).

RESOLUTIONS. To think in our sorrows and

(1) John, xii, 12-13. — (2) Litany.

bereavements of Jesus abandoned by all, even by those whom He had overwhelmed with benefits, and for whom He suffered.

POINT II.

The soldiers therefore, when they had crucified him, took his garments and they made four parts, to every soldier a part (1).

CONSIDERATIONS. Six days ago the inhabitants of Jerusalem were not content with going forth to welcome the Saviour in triumphal procession, but also spread their garments in the way (2). And how do the people treat this same Divine Saviour now? They strip Him of His garments, and in His presence, even before He expired, the soldiers took His garments, (*and they made four parts, to every soldier a part*) (3) like spoil given over to their plunder.

APPLICATIONS. This complete spoliation which Jesus permitted while yet alive, reminds us of the inconstancy of fortune, the fragility, the nothingness of worldly goods, of those ephemeral possessions which men seek with so much energy and toil, with so much danger to their salvation. Jesus suffers Himself to be despoiled of everything with perfect calmness, because He is not attached to anything on earth. Thank Him for having made you realise the inconstancy and nothingness of earthly possessions, and for having taught you to be detached from them.

AFFECTIONS. O Jesus, so cruelly stripped of all, teach me to renounce even the simplest of my misplaced desires.

(1) John, XIX, 23. — (2) Matt., XXI, 8. — (3) John, XIX, 23.

RESOLUTIONS. To strive more and more to detach my heart from perishable and delusive earthly possessions.

POINT III.

And they that passed by blasphemed him, wagging their heads, and saying : If thou be the Son of God come down from the Cross. In like manner also the chief priests...mocking said : He saved others, himself he cannot save (1).

CONSIDERATIONS. A fresh contrast, no less remarkable than the two preceding ones. Six days ago, the people could not find expressions enough to bless Jesus as their Messiah; all along the road from Bethage to Jerusalem their cries were heard, repeating a thousand times *Hosanna (salvation) to the Son of David! Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest (2).* And now, these same people, after having denied, condemned and scorned Him, fill His last hours with mockery, curses and blasphemies.

APPLICATIONS. To-day *Hosanna!* to-morrow *Crucify Him!* To-day esteemed and acclaimed; to-morrow forgotten, disdained, despised. Such is the glory of this world. What folly then, if in doing good works and in making sacrifices, you sought only for notice and applause. Not only would you lose all merit before God, but also the esteem of men who, even if they are vain themselves, cannot tolerate vanity in religious people.

COLLOQUY. With St. Mary Magdalen, the inseparable companion of Jesus suffering and dying.

(1) Matt., xxvii, 39-41. — (2) Matt., xxi, 9.

MONDAY.

MOTIVES FOR PENANCE

TAKEN FROM THE THOUGHT OF HELL.

I. *Prelude.* Imagine a soul in hell asking for one hour in which to do penance. O! if an hour were given me!

II. *Prelude.* Ask for grace to derive from the contemplation of eternal punishment a sincere spirit of penance.

POINT I.

CONSIDERATIONS. Perhaps I deserve hell : the first motive for doing penance. If I have committed a single mortal sin, there is no room for doubt : it is certain that I have deserved eternal punishment. How dreadful it would have been had death overtaken me when I was committing my sin. I should now be the prey of the avenging flames of hell. God has been merciful, for time has been given me to do penance. *He hath not done in like manner* (1) to the multitude of condemned sinners who cry from the depths of hell : *I am tormented in this flame* (2). *O, if an hour were given me to do penance!*

APPLICATIONS. Should not the thought of my sin which has all but cast me into the depths of hell, and above all, the thought of the infinite goodness of God when I was offending Him, urge me to avenge on my own body, the instrument of my sins, the outrage offered to my

(1) Ps. CXLVII, 20. — (2) Luke, XVI, 24.

loving Father, and the injury inflicted on my own soul? Should it not make me choose the greatest severities of penance with ardour, and make me persevere in a life of penance to the end? If, by a special favour of God you have preserved your baptismal innocence, you have contracted a sacred debt towards Him, the debt of gratitude : how can you pay it? By striving above all, like St. Teresa, to obtain by supererogatory acts of penance, graces of conversion for the unhappy sinners whom the devil is leading to hell.

AFFECTIONS. *Burn, cut and spare not, Lord, here on earth; so long as Thou sparest me in eternity* (1).

RESOLUTIONS. I will take up with renewed ardour the different practices of penance recommended in the meditation of the first Monday in Lent.

POINT II.

CONSIDERATIONS. I am in danger of hell : a second motive for doing penance. The warning comes from Our Lord Himself : *Except you do penance, you shall all likewise perish* (2). Why is our perdition certain if we fail to do penance? Because the pride and sinful desires which infect our minds and hearts on account of original sin, rule our actions and infallibly lead us into all kinds of transgressions and sins if we do not resist by practising continual penance and mortification. When this fact is clearly understood, it should convince people

(1) St. Augustine. — (2) Luke, xiii, 5.

who live in the world that the spirit of penance and mortification is as necessary for them as for those living in the cloister, and more so, since they are far more exposed to the influences of bad example, and to the temptations of pride and sinful desires. Nevertheless, a common delusion in the world is to regard penance as solely necessary for religious Orders. Have you not thought this also?

APPLICATIONS. Recognise therefore, that the Church is right in exhorting her children so tenderly to do works of penance and mortification. Submit to her pressing exhortations. Now that we have entered on Holy Week, try to do even more during these last days than you have done yet.

AFFECTIONS. *From everlasting death, O Lord deliver us! That Thou wouldst bring us to true penance, we beseech Thee, hear us* (1).

RESOLUTIONS. The same as those of the preceding Point.

POINT III.

CONSIDERATIONS. Others more perfect than myself are eternally lost : A third motive for doing penance. The angels fell in heaven, and from heaven they were cast into hell. Faith tells us this. They had no time to do penance. Immediate punishment followed their offence. Another fact no less terrible is that the renegade apostle Judas was called and trained by Our Lord Himself in the virtues and practices of religious perfection and of the apostolate.

(1) Litany of the Saints.

He spent nearly three years in close intercourse with Jesus, yet in spite of this he secretly fostered evil in his heart, and became at length capable of conceiving and carrying out the most execrable of crimes which led him to despair, suicide and hell.

APPLICATIONS. *Wherefore he that thinketh himself to stand*, says the Apostle, *let him take heed lest he fall* (1). Let him untiringly subdue his pride, his flesh and evil tendencies by continual mortification. Such is the Apostle St. Paul's practical conclusion : *I chastise my body*, he says, *and bring it into subjection : lest perhaps when I have preached to others. I myself should become a castaway* (2). Think, act as he did and you will be saved with him.

COLLOQUY. With St. Paul who, although confirmed in grace, and raised to such sanctity, was yet so distrustful of self and severe in his self-condemnation. Implore him to obtain for you the spirit of humility and penance.

TUESDAY.

THE THIRD WORD OF JESUS.

HE GIVES US MARY AS OUR MOTHER.

I. *Prelude*. Look at Our Lady and St. John at the foot of the Cross.

II. *Prelude*. Ask for grace to grow constantly in the love of Jesus and Mary.

(1) 1 *Corin.*, x, 12. — (2) *Ibid.*, ix, 27.

POINT I.

Now there stood by the Cross of Jesus, his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary (1) of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene (2).

CONSIDERATIONS. The Mother of Jesus stood by the Cross. Let us consider or rather wonder at two things which are equally remarkable, and apparently incompatible : the excessive suffering of Our Lady, and her heroic courage. Who will ever be able to comprehend how she the most loving of Mothers could bear to see her Divine Son nailed to the Cross, and suffering thus for three hours without fainting, without dying. Many painters, it is true, have depicted her in a state of prostration, but they are clearly a contradiction of Scripture as explicitly testified by the text of St. John the Evangelist, quoted as a heading to this Point. And there is good reason to believe that although her soul was pierced by a sword of sorrow, Our Lady united her sacrifice to that of her Son in His immolation for the salvation of the world.

APPLICATIONS. There is no doubt that this superhuman strength of soul in Mary was the result of extraordinary grace, a miracle of grace. But it was also the fruit of her fidelity in bearing with heroic resignation, the trials to which her faith and constancy had previous-

(1) This Mary was first cousin to the Blessed Virgin by marriage. She is called her sister according to the Hebrew custom, which also gave the name of brothers to first cousins.

(2) John, xix, 25.

ly been subjected. God gives His grace in proportion to our correspondence with them. Co-operate therefore faithfully with grace; be generous in the ordinary trials of life, and with God's help you will be strengthened to bear the greatest of difficulties. Examine your past life; there you will find the confirmation of this consoling truth.

AFFECTIONS. Revere, glorify in the person of the Blessed Virgin, the Valiant, the *Admirable Mother*, the *Queen of Martyrs*, as she is called by the Church.

RESOLUTIONS. Let us be habitually faithful and generous in the service of God, and He will not allow us to succumb in our trials.

POINT II.

When Jesus therefore, had seen his mother and the disciple standing whom he loved, he saith to his mother : Woman, behold thy son (1).

CONSIDERATIONS. Consider with what calmness and serenity Jesus thinks of, and provides for everything, forgetting Himself in the midst of His agony. His first care is for His Mother who is so deeply afflicted. He gives her another son to sustain and comfort her while she is in this world, in the person of the pure and well-beloved disciple. *Woman*, He says, *behold thy son*, and at that moment He fills St. John's heart with the tenderest and most generous love that ever son felt for his Mother.

APPLICATIONS. A great lesson is given us

(1) John, XIX, 26.

here by Our Lord. He teaches and encourages us by His example, to rise above our sorrows, to forget ourselves, or rather to renounce ourselves by caring and providing for the necessities of our fellow-men. Then to children He gives an example of duty to their Mother, whatever their age and their own sorrows.

AFFECTIONS. Ask for the spirit of sacrifice and entire self-renunciation.

RESOLUTIONS. To console and gladden the heart of Our Lady in the person of our parents by lavishing our care on them so long as God leaves them with us, and also after their death, by endeavouring with all the means in our power to procure for them eternal rest.

POINT III.

After that, he saith to the disciple: Behold thy mother (1).

CONSIDERATIONS. After providing for the necessities of His afflicted Mother, Jesus bethought Him of His beloved disciple. Before He dies, He wishes to leave him a last pledge of His love by giving him the Blessed Virgin as his Mother. Turning His dying eyes towards St. John He says, *Behold thy Mother*. Those words are full of consolation for us all because, according to the unanimous interpretation of the Fathers, the disciple John at that time represented all the faithful, and consequently each one of us in our Lord's mind. Besides, Jesus filled the heart of Mary from that moment

(1) John, XIX, 27.

with an overflowing love for all mankind, so that the maternity in Mary might be the most perfect image of the paternity which is in God Himself.

APPLICATIONS. Endeavour therefore, to love and honour the Blessed Virgin you Mother more and more, and to spread devotion to her.

COLLOQUY. With my beloved Mother. I shall thank her for all she has done for me; the many perils she has averted from me, and the many graces she has obtained for me. I shall again consecrate myself to her, and beseech her to receive me as her child.

WEDNESDAY.

FOURTH AND FIFTH WORDS

OF JESUS NAILED TO THE CROSS.

I. *Prelude.* See Jesus on the Cross during the darkness that overspread the earth at noon.

II. *Prelude.* Ask for the grace of love and compunction.

POINT I.

Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over the whole earth until the ninth hour (1).

CONSIDERATIONS. This prolonged darkness during the three hours that Jesus remained suffering on the Cross, cannot be explained by any natural law, since the Jewish passover always coincided with the full moon, a circum-

(1) Matt., xxvii, 45.

tance which makes an eclipse of the sun an impossibility. Therefore, it was another manifest miracle, visible to all. Yet the Jews remained unconvinced by this and all the other miracles which preceded, accompanied or followed the death of their Messiah, although they had been distinctly predicted as various proofs of His coming.

APPLICATIONS. In regard to this St. Gregory the Great makes a very striking reflection on the excessive blindness with which men can allow themselves to be carried away. All the elements, he says, bore testimony to the advent of their Creator in their several ways : the heavens announced His birth by a star ; the sea became firm beneath His footsteps ; the sun grew dark ; the earth trembled, and the rocks were rent at His death ; and Limbo gave up those it held captive ; yet the Jews harder than the rocks, remained obstinate in their blindness. Alas ! why are there Christians also with hearts perverted by sin, who present an example to the world, of a hardness as exceptional and deplorable as these Jews ?

AFFECTIONS. Let us thank God for having *delivered us from the power of darkness*, as St. Paul expresses it, and for having *translated us into the kingdom of the Son of His love* (1). Let us ask for a deep distrust of self.

RESOLUTIONS. To pray often for the conversion of the Jews, and for so many nations who sit *in darkness and in the shadow of death* (2).

(1) *Col.*, 1, 13. — (2) *Ps.* cvi, 10.

POINT II.

And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying : Eli, Eli, lamma sabachthani? that is, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me (1)!

CONSIDERATIONS. These are the first words of the twenty-first psalm, in which King David, nine centuries before, gave the details of the Passion, rather as an historian than as a prophet. By repeating them word for word in a loud voice at such a solemn moment, Our Lord wished to afford the Jews another proof that He was the true Messias predicted by the prophets, and wished us, to whom these words were to be transmitted, to know that He suffered without His extreme anguish being relieved by Divine intervention in any way.

APPLICATIONS. *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?* These plaintive words from an afflicted but perfectly resigned Son, teach us that in order to be true followers of Jesus Christ, we should learn to do without sensible consolations of grace, even during the hardest trials we have to bear for His glory ; they teach us, moreover, what is most consoling, that we are not forbidden from making our complaints to God in times of anguish, provided they are united to entire resignation.

AFFECTIONS. Teach me, O Jesus, to suffer much for Thee willingly, and to suffer without sensible consolation.

RESOLUTIONS. To sympathise with souls that suffer. Not to reprove them for the complaints

(1) Matt., xxvii, 46.

which escape them. To encourage them, and if necessary, ourselves with the remembrance of Jesus suffering without either Divine or human consolation.

POINT III.

Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled said : I thirst (1).

CONSIDERATIONS. Our Lord had told the Jews that all that was contained in the Scriptures regarding the Messiah would be exactly fulfilled in Him. Thus in the sixty-eighth Psalm was written : *In my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink (2)*. Therefore, that this prophecy might be fulfilled, Jesus said : *I thirst*, knowing that the soldiers would give Him vinegar to drink, as it was always at their disposal, according to the custom of the time, to quench the sufferer's thirst. In fact *one of them*, says St. Matthew, *running took a sponge and filled it with vinegar ; and put it on a reed, and gave him to drink (3)*.

APPLICATIONS. After having considered the perfect exactness and heroic fidelity with which Our Lord fulfilled the details of the prophecies regarding His mission among men until His last breath, what ought you to think of your want of care in fulfilling your daily duties or at least certain rules of conduct or practices of devotion which you have undertaken, and which have for some time been neglected on the pretext that they were of little importance?

(1) John., XIX, 28. — (2) Ps. LXVIII, 22. — (3) Matt., XXVII, 48.

COLLOQUY. With Jesus on the Cross, suffering in so many ways with such generosity, constancy and resignation : *leaving you an example that you should follow his steps*, says St. Peter (1).

THURSDAY.

SIXTH WORD OF JESUS

NAILED TO THE CROSS.

I. *Prelude.* Hear your crucified Lord uttering these words :
« *Consummatum est.* » *It is consummated.*

II. *Prelude.* Ask for grace to enable you to say these same words at the hour of your death.

POINT I.

*Jesus therefore, when he had taken the vinegar said :
It is consummated (2).*

CONSIDERATIONS. Consider how truly Jesus, having reached the end of His mortal life, could say before the world : *It is consummated.* All that I owed to God My Father in reparation of His glory ; all that I owed to man, whose salvation is accomplished ; all the labours, humiliations and sufferings required by My mission, all is consummated *I have finished the word which thou gavest me to do. — I come to Thee. And now glorify thou me, O Father with thyself (3).*

APPLICATIONS. How happy, how supremely happy will that Christian be who, at his death, can truthfully say that he has faithfully accom-

(1) I *Peter*, II, 21. — (2) John, XIX, 30. — (3) John, XVII, 4, 13.

plished whatever had been required of him by God, men, and his vocation; who can say : Since I consecrated myself to God, the aim of my actions has always been the glory of God, the salvation of souls, and my own sanctification; I have endeavoured to be faithful to my resolution to aim at perfection, and to edify all men by a good example. It has been at the cost of difficulties, sacrifices, sometimes humiliations, but all is over : *It is consummated*, I am happy; I die content and full of hope. Will you be able to speak thus at the supreme hour? Examine your life, it will enlighten you; death is usually the echo of life.

AFFECTIONS. Ask Jesus to increase in you the desire or rather the will to live as a faithful Christian, so that you may die as one of the elect.

RESOLUTIONS. I shall make this desire effectual by reforming even the smallest irregularity in my conduct.

POINT II.

« *Consummatum est.* » *It is consummated.*

CONSIDERATIONS. The meaning of these words in our meditation is made complete by those other words uttered by Jesus at the Last Supper, a few hours before : *I leave the world, and I go to the Father* (1). It is as though He said : All being accomplished, there is nothing now to keep me in this world, and I leave it with no regret. But how could Jesus leave it with no regret since death must separate Him from those

(1) John, xvi, 28.

in the world whom He loved more than a father loves his children? Because by dying for them, He found means to enable Him to remain amongst them until the consummation of the world. In what way? We know that it was by the wondrous mystery His love performed a few hours before His Passion — by the institution of the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist.

APPLICATIONS. To-day, Holy Thursday, is the anniversary of that glorious institution. The Church not only reminds us of it in the Office for the day, in the Gospel and prayers of the Mass, but principally in the ceremonial, which is used on this day alone, namely : that only the Bishops in Cathedrals, and the Abbot or Superior in Communities, offer the Holy Sacrifice ; the other priests receive Communion from their hands in order to represent the Apostles who received Communion this day from the hand of Jesus Christ.

AFFECTIONS. Arouse an ardent desire in yourself to celebrate in a worthy manner this great anniversary, and to communicate with exceptional devotion and fervour.

RESOLUTIONS. During the day I will think frequently of the great mysteries which have made it memorable.

POINT III.

« Consummatum est. » It is consummated.

CONSIDERATIONS. In giving utterance to these words, Our Lord doubtless had in His mind the great act He had just accomplished the preceding night, when He celebrated the last Pasch with His Apostles. He had substituted

for the figurative sacrifices of the old law, and the immolation of the Paschal lamb, the Sacrifice of the new law (the Holy Mass) by the immolation of Himself : an immolation which will last until the end of time. This is why He longed to celebrate this Pasch, as He had declared to His apostles : *With desire I have desired to eat this pasch with you* (1).

APPLICATIONS. This day is therefore, the anniversary of the institution of the Pasch, the celebration of which is enjoined so strictly by the Church on all her children. Rejoice that you are able to fulfil it on the same day as the Apostles, and omit nothing which can help you to prepare suitable dispositions. Prepare your heart from this moment by fervent acts of faith, humility, trust and desire.

COLLOQUY. With our loving Saviour.

FRIDAY.

THE LAST WORD OF JESUS. HIS DEATH.

I. *Prelude.* Contemplate Jesus on the Cross ; and listen to these last words : *Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit* (2).

II. *Prelude.* Ask for a tranquil and holy death.

POINT I.

*Jesus crying with a loud voice said :
Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit* (3).

CONSIDERATIONS. Listen to these last words of the dying Jesus, and meditate on them carefully one by one ; they are the same which

(1) Luke, XXII, 15. — (2) Id., XXIII, 46. — (3) Id.

will be suggested to you by the priest at your death-bed : *Father*. — O what sweetness is contained in this word! How well fitted to soften the bitterness of death, to inspire confidence in the last struggle. — *Into thy hands I commend my spirit*. *I commend*, is according to the Greek text, I place (deliver into thy keeping) *my spirit into thy hands* whence it came. Thou didst entrust it to me, didst unite it for a certain time to this mortal body, that it might glorify Thee on earth; now death is about to separate it from my body till my resurrection, so I place it in Thy Fatherly Hands.

APPLICATIONS. Make use often of this aspiration of the dying Jesus especially before going to sleep which is the image of death, so that at the supreme moment it may be in your heart, and so come naturally to your lips. Say it, united in thought and love to the dying Jesus, who in commending His Soul to His Father, says St. Athanasius, presented and commended those of all mankind.

AFFECTIONS. These will consist in the recommendation of your soul with the dying Jesus, as you would wish to do it at the hour of death.

RESOLUTIONS. I will try to acquire or strengthen this practice every night before going to sleep.

POINT II.

And saying this, he gave up the ghost (1).

CONSIDERATIONS. In this way our loving Saviour Jesus dies, at the moment chosen by

(1) Luke, xxiii, 46.

Himself, without suffering the overwhelming Agony which He endured in the garden of Olives (1). He dies forsaken, calumniated, dishonoured; but immediately after, all things proclaim His innocence, His glory and His Divinity. The centurion, struck by the wonder of His evidently voluntary death proclaims Him a just man, the Son of God : *Indeed this was a just man* (2). *Indeed the Son of God* (3). *And behold the veil of the temple was rent in two from the top even to the bottom, and the earth quaked, and the rocks were rent. And the graves were opened. And those who saw the things that were done, were sore afraid* (4), *and returned striking their breasts saying : Indeed this was a just man* (5).

Jesus is dead! But death is vanquished, and the gates of eternal life have been opened to us. Jesus is dead, but from His Heart pierced by the lance there flows with the blood and the water, the life-giving Sacraments of the Church, the Spouse of Christ, which by an inexhaustible fecundity will raise up a numberless multitude of children for Him throughout the world until the end of time. Jesus is dead. His lacerated body is still nailed to the Cross, but His Soul is flooded with ineffable joys, and is already adored in Limbo.

APPLICATIONS and AFFECTIONS. O Soul of Jesus, O Body of Jesus, that have suffered so much for me, what shall I do, what can I do to prove my reverence, love and gratitude to

(1) See the meditation for the first Sunday of Lent. — (2) Luke, xxiii, 47. — (3) Mark, xv, 39. — (4) Matt., xxvii, 51-54. — (5) Luke, xxiii, 47-48.

Thee? I adore and bless Thee; I rejoice with Thee that Thy sufferings are over, and recalling the saying of Thy Apostle : *Christ died for all, that they also who live may not now live to themselves, but unto Him* (1). I shall strive O Jesus, to die more and more to self, to the world, to all that is displeasing to Thee.

RESOLUTIONS. If unable to spend last night in prayer, I shall at least spend all of Good Friday in recollection, compunction and penance.

POINT III.

And bowing his head, he gave up the ghost (2).

CONTEMPLATION. At this third Point there is no need to do more than contemplate the inanimate Body of your loving Saviour. Look at those eyes which have shed so many tears of tenderness and compassion for sinners; that mouth, that tongue which spoke to glorify God or to instruct and comfort mankind; those hands torn by the nails, which had only been stretched forth to comfort and bless; those pierced feet which had only moved by obedience, never weary in the search for strayed sheep. With what glory will all the senses of that Body be surrounded, with what joys will they be inundated in heaven for being immolated on the Cross for the sublime interests of the glory of God and the salvation of souls.

APPLICATIONS. What confidence and joy you will experience at the approach of death, when you remember that you have made good use

(1) II *Corin.*, v, 15. — (2) John, xix, 30.

of all the senses and members of your body! Consider in detail how you may yet better employ and sanctify them. Make your resolutions accordingly, and ask for grace to be faithful to them.

COLLOQUY. Paraphrase the prayer : « *Anima Christi* ». *Soul of Christ sanctify me.*

SATURDAY.

THE BURIAL OF JESUS.

I. *Prelude.* Assist in spirit at the descent from the Cross, at the embalming and burial of the Body of Jesus.

II *Prelude.* Ask for grace to spend this last day of Lent in a holy way.

POINT I.

And after these things (an hour after the death of Jesus), *there came a certain rich man of Arimathea named Joseph who also himself was a disciple of Jesus* (1), *but secretly for fear of the Jews* (2), *and went in boldly to Pilate, and begged the body of Jesus. And Joseph taking the body wrapt it up in a clean linen cloth* (3), *Nicodemus also came... bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about an hundred pound weight. They took therefore, the body of Jesus, and bound it in linen cloths with the spices, as the manner of the Jews is to bury. Now there was in the place a garden; and in the garden a new sepulchre wherein no man had yet been laid* (4), *which he had hewed out in a rock. He laid the body of Jesus therein, and rolled a great stone to the door... and went his way* (5).

CONSIDERATIONS. Come with sorrow to the burial of Jesus. The crowds and the soldiers have already departed. Only the three Marys and St. John the disciple remained at the foot of the Cross. How can they lower the adorable

(1) Matt., xxvii, 57. — (2) John, xix, 38. — (3) Matt., xxvii, 59. — (4) John, xix, 39-41. — (5) Matt., xxvii, 60.

Body of Jesus, and find a sepulchre for Him? There is another and greater perplexity also, for Jewish law forbids the internment of those who have been executed until the flesh of their bodies, thrown into an open grave, has been consumed. Providence, as we see by the Gospel narrative supplied everything by the co-operation of two men who though formerly timid and fearful, suddenly became, through grace, bold and dauntless. Contemplate them raising the ladder, and mounting up; removing the nails from the Feet and Hands of Jesus; lowering Him from the Cross, placing Him in the arms of His Blessed Mother; then helping that disconsolate Mother to wash her Son's Body which is covered with blood, to wrap it in linen with precious spices, and to place it finally in the glorious sepulchre of which the prophet Isaias had spoken in prophecy : *And his sepulchre will be glorious* (1).

APPLICATIONS. Consider here how God acts with respect to His well-beloved Son : the more abandoned and humiliated He had been, the more He is surrounded now with care and honour. He will act in this way towards you also, if you are patient and resigned for love of Him during desolation, abandonment, humiliations and sufferings. How patient have you been? How will you act in the future?

AFFECTIONS. I shall offer myself to suffer much, even to die for Jesus who died for love of me.

RESOLUTIONS. In spite of the additional diffi-

(1) *Isaias*, xl, 10

culties caused very often by the eve of a great feast, I will endeavour to spend this day in deep recollection.

POINT II.

The next day, the chief priests and the Pharisees came together to Pilate saying : Sir, we have remembered that that seducer said while he was yet alive . After three days I will rise again. Command therefore the sepulchre to be guarded until the third day : lest perhaps his disciples come and steal him away, and say to the people : He is risen from the dead; and the last error be worse than the first. Pilate saith to them : You have a guard; go guard it as you know. And they departing, made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone and setting guards (1).

CONSIDERATIONS. How wonderfully the Providence of God is shown here in all these circumstances of the burial of Jesus, designed obviously to make it impossible for His enemies to throw any doubt on the reality of His resurrection. In *a new sepulchre wherein no man yet had been laid* (2); therefore, no one could possibly give credence to any suggestion that some one else had come out of that tomb alive; *hewn out in a rock* (3), it could not possibly be said that the sepulchre had been undermined, and that the Saviour's Body had been carried away thus without the guards' knowledge. It was near Calvary : had it not been for this proximity, there would have been no time to make the necessary arrangements for burial, as all had to be concluded before the Sabbath rest, which commenced at six that evening. Then there were the various precautions taken by the Saviour's enemies, to make it impossible,

(1) Matt., xxvii, 62-66. — (2) John., xix, 41. — (3) Matt., xxvii, 60.

not only to carry away, but even to approach His body. What reason was there for all these providential circumstances? That the miracle of Our Lord's resurrection should be made manifest and beyond dispute for ever, and that it should serve as a firm foundation to the truth of the Gospel. This is what happened in reality, as testified by the words of the Apostles and the incontrovertible proof of Christian apologists.

APPLICATIONS. You believe in the unceasing action of Providence. Therefore, pay no heed to the arguments of false strategists who see nothing but chance or the caprice of men in the events of the world. Put far from you also that deep discouragement which sometimes overpowers the most devoted souls of Christ's Church, when they see her oppressed by triumphs of impiety. It was when the disciples of Jesus thought His cause lost, that it triumphed, and His enemies were confounded for ever. Put far from you above all, those melancholy impressions caused by the thought of death, particularly when we see a member of our family or a friend lowered into the grave. Resist these impressions, these thoughts of excessive sadness if they come to you, by the consoling thoughts of the resurrection from which we shall pass, as did Jesus our Leader, from the tomb to the immortal life of heaven.

COLLOQUY. With Jesus, whose body rests in the sepulchre, separated from His Soul, but yet united to His Divinity. Let us unite with the angels who contemplate Him with awe, and who adore Him with ineffable reverence, love and devotion.

THE RESURRECTION

OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST.

This is the day which the Lord hath made :
let us be glad and rejoice therein. « *Hæc
dies quam fecit Dominus; exultemus et
lætetur in ea* » (1).

I. *Prelude.* Imagine Jesus coming forth glorious from the tomb.

II. *Prelude.* Ask for a heart filled with spiritual joy as a result of this meditation. Three great motives encourage this gladness

POINT I. — REASONS FOR REJOICING WITH JESUS.

CONSIDERATIONS. *He is risen, he is not here* (2). These were the first words the angel addressed to the holy women who had assembled at the Saviour's tomb at break of day. What joy they must have brought to their desolate hearts! What joy is aroused even to-day in the hearts of the faithful when they hear them spoken by the Church in the Office and Mass of this great day. « *Surrexit!* » *He is risen!* Jesus our beloved King and our Father, whose sorrowful Passion we have been mourning so deeply, has come back to life, to die no more. Conqueror of all His enemies and of death itself, He rejoices with wondrous glad-

(1) Office of the Church : Ps. cxvii, 24. — (2) Mark, xvi, 6.

ness in His glorified humanity, and His heavenly Father has given Him omnipotence in heaven, on earth and in hell. Let us rejoice in Him and for Him. *Exullemus et lætemur*. May your heart be filled with joy on this glorious day. The Church encourages us by her example, for instead of her mourning garb and solemn accents of lamentation, she substitutes festival ornaments and joyous canticles, mingled with the oft repeated cry of the exultant « *Alleluia*. — *Surrexit Christus, Alleluia!* » *Christ is risen, Alleluia*.

APPLICATIONS. Let us profit by the occasion of this feast to renew and strengthen in ourselves a heart habitually full of joy, that spiritual joy which embraces every element of happiness and progress in a Christian. While we are in these dispositions, everything appears easy; hard work and crosses are changed into joys; we run rather than walk in the way of perfection, and what is of the greatest importance, all our actions become more pleasing to God, and more meritorious for ourselves. *For God loveth a cheerful giver* (1). Recall your past experiences of joy and sorrow, and you will find the truth of what is said here.

AFFECTIONS. I will rejoice with Jesus on the glory and joys of His resurrection, and ask for grace to obtain a heart full of spiritual joy and love.

RESOLUTIONS. I desire to keep the eyes of my soul fixed on the risen Christ to-day; to rejoice with Him; and to make my joy fruitful in good works.

(1) II *Corin.*, ix, 7.

POINT II. — MOTIVES FOR REJOICING WITH MARY.

CONSIDERATIONS. No one doubts that Jesus first appeared to His Blessed Mother; but who can form an idea of the joy which filled her maternal heart when she again saw that beloved Son, who had been torn from her by the most cruel of deaths! — when she saw Him not only full of life, but as glorious and radiant as He had been before disfigured by the scourging and the crucifixion.

APPLICATIONS. The sorrow and joys of a Mother are the sorrows and joys of her children. Mary is our Mother. May our joy on this day then be in proportion to the share we have taken in her afflictions, to the childlike love we bear her. But may this joy be more than that of a day; may it no more vanish, but continually produce the admirable results considered in the preceding Point.

AFFECTIONS. « *Regina celi, lætare, Alleluia!* » *Queen of heaven, rejoice, Alleluia!* « *Ora pro nobis Deum. Alleluia!* » *And pray to God for us, Alleluia!* in order that we may participate abundantly in the benefits of His glorious Resurrection! *Alleluia!*

RESOLUTIONS. I will endeavour to repeat with great devotion to-day and throughout all Eastertide, this joyous anthem so pleasing to Mary.

POINT III. — MOTIVES FOR REJOICING ON OUR PART.

CONSIDERATIONS. What an ineffable motive for joy is contained in this thought alone: The Resurrection of Our Lord is the type and the

pledge of our own resurrection. This is not merely a pious belief, it is an article of faith. *Knowing*, says St. Paul, *that he who raised up Jesus, will raise us up also with Jesus* (1); *that we may be also glorified with him* (2). *We shall reign with him* (3). With this thought death is no longer death; it has lost its bitterness.

APPLICATIONS. Engrave this thought deeply in your mind, and sadness will never find access to your soul. In all your tribulations of mind and body you will say : *I believe in the resurrection of the body and life everlasting*. I believe that the more I work and suffer for Jesus, the more I shall rejoice with Him in Heaven.

COLLOQUY. With the risen Christ, in accordance with the affections and resolutions of the first two Points.

EASTER MONDAY.

OCTAVE OF THE RESURRECTION.

THE WONDERFUL PREROGATIVES

OF THE GLORIFIED BODY OF JESUS.

I. *Prelude*. Imagine the glorified Body of Jesus.

II. *Prelude*. Ask for grace to understand the prerogatives of the glorified Body of your Saviour, and that you may share them with Him on the great day of the Resurrection.

(1) II *Corin.*, IV, 14. — (2) *Rom.*, VIII, 17. — (3) II *Tim.*, II, 12.

POINT I. — THE IMPASSIBILITY AND IMMORTALITY
OF THE BODY OF JESUS.

CONSIDERATIONS. Directly the Soul of Our Lord was re-united to His Body, there was imparted to it, with life, the gift of impassibility. That Body which had been subject, shortly before, to all human infirmities, to cold, hunger, and weariness, and to the pains and afflictions of death, became absolutely impassible and immortal. *Death*, says the Apostle, *shall no more have dominion over him* (1).

APPLICATIONS. How had Jesus as Man, merited these sublime prerogatives? By the humiliations, sufferings and death He endured for the glory of His heavenly Father, and in atonement for the sins of the world. This blessed impassibility and immortality are promised you on these same conditions. Why then dread sorrow and death so much? Try rather to sanctify all your crosses as well as death itself, by accepting them with entire resignation to the Will of God, in expiation for your sins, and for the sins of all men. The more you suffer in this spirit with Jesus, the more fully you will participate in the wonderful prerogatives of His glorified Body. Happy the Christian who always bears this in mind! How courageous he will be, and what peace he will enjoy in affliction. Endeavour to be of the number of these happy souls.

AFFECTIONS. Acts of faith on these consoling

(1) *Rom.*, vi, 9.

truths. Ask for grace to keep them always in remembrance.

RESOLUTIONS. In trials and sufferings of the body, I will remember these words of the Apostle : *We look for the Saviour, our Lord Jesus Christ, who will reform the body of our lowliness made like to the body of his glory* (1).

POINT II. — THE SPIRITUALITY AND ACTIVITY
OF THE BODY OF JESUS.

CONSIDERATIONS. A spiritual body, a body which has all the properties of a spirit, namely, the power of penetrating matter, of passing from one place to another, however distant, solely by an act of will, is something we cannot comprehend, far less explain. Nevertheless, these were the properties of Our Lord's glorified Body. More than once, according to St. John, the Apostles saw their Divine Master appear in their midst in the Cenacle although *the doors were shut, ... for fear of the Jews* (2).

APPLICATIONS. These will also be the properties and wonderful prerogatives of the bodies of the just after the resurrection, for all eternity in heaven. One day I shall share them; hope and assurance are given me by St. Paul on condition that I strive to lead a spiritual life by making matter subject to spirit. *It is sown a natural body, it shall rise a spiritual body* (3), *if by the spirit you mortify the deeds of the flesh* (4). Have I done this? What does my conscience tell me?

(1) *Philipp.*, III, 20-21. — (2) *John*, XX, 19. — (3) *I Corin.*, XV, 44. — (4) *Rom.*, VIII, 13.

AFFECTIONS. I shall rejoice and shall animate myself by meditating on these holy and consoling thoughts which are so much in accordance with the mysteries of Easter-time.

RESOLUTIONS. To repeat these words used by a great ascetic : *Often bethink thyself wherefore thou camest into this world. Was it not that thou mightest live to God, and become a spiritual man* (1)?

POINT III. — THE RADIANCE OF THE BODY OF JESUS.

CONSIDERATIONS. We require to provide ourselves with a light to guide our steps in the darkness. For the risen Jesus there is no more darkness. His glorified Body is its own light. The splendours of His Divinity overflowing from His Soul to His Body have made Him more radiant and resplendent than the sun at noon-day. On Mount Tabor, the Apostles had already caught a glimpse of this glorious and wondrous transfiguration.

APPLICATIONS. If, as I hope, the happiness is granted me, to rise with the just, this will be the glorious transfiguration of my body also. It will be a radiant body. The more it has been used, the more it has been worn by mortification and labours undertaken for the glory of God, and the salvation of Souls, the greater will be the brightness it will diffuse.

COLLOQUY. With God the Father. Thank Him for the sublime prerogatives granted to humanity through His Incarnate Word, our loving Saviour. Ask Him for grace to participate from

(1) *Imitation* : Book I, Chap. xxv.

now in the impassibility and immortality by an invincible constancy in good resolutions and in the spirituality and activity, by facility and readiness in penetrating the mysteries of faith and the secrets of the spiritual life; and finally, in the radiance, by the light of good example and edification.

TUESDAY.

THE MARKS OF THE FIVE WOUNDS

WERE RETAINED .

ON THE GLORIFIED BODY OF OUR LORD.

I. *Prelude.* Imagine the brilliance diffused over the Body of Jesus by the glorious marks of the Five Wounds.

II. *Prelude.* Ask for grace to understand why He wished to retain them after His Resurrection.

POINT I. — THE WOUNDS OF JESUS ARE MARKS OF GLORY.

CONSIDERATIONS. A prince who returns in triumph to his dominions is proud of the wounds he has received in fighting against the enemies of his people. Therefore, we need not be surprised that our risen Lord desired to retain on His glorified Body the wounds He received while fighting and triumphing for us on the wood of the Cross. Moreover, He had many other reasons for keeping them. In the first place, He wished us to understand how greatly He esteems, and wishes us to esteem through His example, any sufferings and obloquy endured in God's cause; since it is only by humiliations and sufferings that we can attain to eternal glory and happiness.

APPLICATIONS. The contemplation of the

Wounds and humiliations of Jesus has always aroused the noblest and most generous desires in the Saints. Despising all that is sought after by the world with so much eagerness, such as honours, the splendour of a great name and the pleasures of the senses, they aspired only to the honour of bearing the livery of their Divine Master; suffering, as He did, hardships, labour and ignominy. They were stimulated far more by the desire of resembling Him in all things, than by the prospect of greater glory and happiness in heaven, or the thought of their own gain. Can you find in your heart any of these marks of the elect disciples of Jesus Christ?

AFFECTIONS. Earnestly ask for grace to be able to say with the Apostle : *God forbid that I should glory save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ ; by whom the world is crucified to me, and I to the world* (1). *I bear the marks of the Lord Jesus in my body* (2).

RESOLUTIONS. To bear at least with patience and resignation, the want of consideration, or the contempt which we may have to suffer.

POINT II. — THE WOUNDS OF JESUS ARE A REFUGE
IN ADVERSITY.

CONSIDERATIONS. Secondly, the Son of God retained His Wounds in order to remind us of His sufferings for love of us, and to give us a pledge of His protection. These Wounds are the refuge ever open to receive and shelter us. They also represent so many eloquent voices pleading for us before His Father. How could He refuse to show mercy towards us, when

(1) *Gal.*, vi, 14. — (2) *Ibid.*, 17.

His beloved Son pleads for us by the sufferings and death He endured for us?

APPLICATIONS. You frequently complain of dryness in prayer, in your visits to the Blessed Sacrament, or in your Communions; of the want of love and almost indifference or coldness you feel sometimes for the Person of your Divine Lord. Where is the remedy to be found for all these evils? In the Wounds of Jesus. — Contemplate them, enter there in spirit, and all your reasons for complaint will disappear. I have found no remedy more efficacious for all my troubles than the wounds of Jesus, says St. Augustine, there I rest in peace and safety.

AFFECTIONS. *O Good Jesus, hear me! Within Thy wounds hide me, suffer me never to be separated from Thee* (1).

RESOLUTIONS. In all my sorrows and temptations, I will take refuge in the Wounds of my loving Saviour.

POINT III. — THE WOUNDS OF JESUS ARE A JUSTIFICATION OF PROVIDENCE.

CONSIDERATIONS. Finally, Our Lord desired that His wounds should remain on His glorified Body to confound sinners on the Day of Judgment, who have reaped no advantage from His Passion, and to perfect the joy of the elect who have profited by it and fulfilled the designs of His wonderful and merciful Providence.

APPLICATIONS. With good reason you desire and hope to be among the elect. This desire

(1) A favourite prayer of St. Ignatius.

and this hope will be realised if you strive from henceforth to reflect the image of your crucified Lord more earnestly. Then with what comfort and joy you will press your dying lips to the crucifix and on the Five Wounds of your Saviour! How you will rejoice from all eternity!

COLLOQUY. With Jesus, who shows us the glorious marks of His Wounds, especially the Wound in His Heart, from which shine flames of love. — Adore Him, give thanks and explain to Him your difficulties and your desires.

WEDNESDAY.

THE FRUITS OF THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST.

I. *Prelude.* Hear Our Lord saying these words : *Have confidence, I have overcome the world* (1).

II. *Prelude.* Ask for grace to participate abundantly in the fruits of the Resurrection.

POINT I. — THE RESURRECTION IS THE FOUNDATION OF OUR FAITH.

CONSIDERATIONS. It was on the miracle of His future Resurrection that Our Lord most relied in the course of His preaching, to prove His own Divinity and the Divinity of His doctrine. Therefore, He decreed that all the measures taken by the Jews after His death, to prevent its realisation, should only serve to prove it the more clearly likewise, the Apostles con-

(1) John, xvi, 33.

tinually supported the truth of the faith they preached with this great and stupendous miracle. *If Christ be not risen again*, St. Paul says, *then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain* (1). The whole world has believed in the miracle of the Resurrection. Millions of martyrs have borne testimony to it by shedding their blood.

APPLICATIONS. How happy I am to possess a faith so clearly Divine, and all its superabundant gifts and benefits, thanks to the mercy of God. Have I proved my gratitude to my Saviour, not only in words, but also and above all, by my works?

AFFECTIONS. Acknowledge, as did the patriarch Jacob, that you are incapable of paying the tribute of gratitude which is due to the Divine liberality : *I am not worthy of the least of all thy mercies* (2).

RESOLUTIONS. To-day I will perform all my actions with fervent love and gratitude.

POINT II. — THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST
IS THE DEFINITE PLEDGE OF OUR OWN RESURRECTION.

CONSIDERATIONS. As it is certain that my Lord rose from the dead to die no more, so is it certain that I shall rise also to a life of eternal bliss if I desire it. Both doctrines have been attested by infallible Truth : *As in Adam all die*, says St. Paul, *so also in Christ all shall be made alive* (3). *He who raised up Jesus, will raise us up also with Jesus* (4).

(1) I Corin., xv, 14. — (2) Gen., xxxii, 10. — (3) I Corin., xv, 22. — (4) II Corin., iv, 14.

Yet so if we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified with him (1).

APPLICATIONS. Great comfort is contained in the thought that this body which I tend with so much care, which must die and fall into dust will one day be given back to me with greatly increased life. It will be immortal, endowed with an immense capability for ineffable and ever renewed joy, which it will receive from the contemplation of the Infinite. Death viewed in this way, is no longer loss nor a cause for grief for the fervent Christian, but a gain; a source of never-ending joy and indescribable comfort.

AFFECTIONS. Declarations of fervent faith in the future resurrection of the body : *I believe in the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting (2).*

RESOLUTIONS. I will often renew this act of faith, above all when the thought of death tends to frighten or sadden me.

POINT III. — THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST
IS A SOLACE IN TRIALS AND INFIRMITIES.

CONSIDERATIONS. A man is deeply grieved when he sees the house he inhabits fall into ruins; but when we assure him that it will be rebuilt and made more beautiful than before, his sorrow is changed into joy. Our body is the abode of our soul. It is fragile however. Presently it will fall into dust notwithstanding all our care. This thought saddens us. But let us be comforted. God will raise it up from its ruins one

(1) *Rom.*, viii, 17. — (2) Apostles Creed.

day, infinitely more beautiful, and from thenceforward, indestructible : *We know*, says the Apostle St. Paul, *if our earthly house of this habitation be dissolved, that we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in heaven* (1). *Our Lord Jesus Christ who will reform the body of our lowliness, made like to the body of his glory* (2). *This mortal must put on immortality* (3).

APPLICATIONS. Always keep these encouraging thoughts of the faith in mind, and you will not spare your health, your strength or any bodily faculty in the service of God and in the fulfilment of your duties which are often very hard. And if you die while still young, you will say joyfully with the Apostle : *For me, to live is Christ : and to die is gain* (4).

COLLOQUY. With St. Paul, who wrote such beautiful words of comfort on the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, and on the resurrection that we are promised.

THURSDAY.

THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST

IS THE TYPE OF OUR SPIRITUAL RESURRECTION.

I. *Prelude*. Hear the Apostle St. Paul saying : *As Christ is risen from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we also may walk in newness of life* (5).

II. *Prelude*. Ask earnestly for the assistance of grace, that you, like Jesus Christ, may rise spiritually — truly — and visibly.

(1) II *Corin.*, v, 1. — (2) *Philipp.*, III, 20-21. — (3) I *Corin.*, xv, 53. — (4) *Philipp.*, I, 21. — (5) *Rom.*, vi, 4.

POINT I.

The Lord is risen (1)!

CONSIDERATIONS. *The Lord is* RISEN — that is to say : He has come forth from the tomb, He has passed on to a new and more perfect life, exempt from all the sorrows of His former life. In the same way, we also should at Easter, rise from the tomb of our sins, our habitual faults and our lukewarmness, in order to pass on to a more perfect and more fervent life, exempt as much as possible, from the imperfections we have endeavoured to efface by penance during the holy season of Lent. *As Christ is risen from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we also may walk in newness of life.*

APPLICATIONS. Examine yourself carefully to see what sins and imperfections have unhappily become a habit with you, and seek for the means you can and should put into practice to begin a new life from which lukewarmness must be banished, as it is the chief cause of your past infidelities ; a life wholly in conformity with the plan you have laid down for yourself with the resolution to be faithful to it always.

AFFECTIONS. I shall ask for the necessary light to enable me to see the state of my soul clearly, and above all for the supernatural strength which is indispensable in order to destroy the deformities and defects of my soul in the sight of God.

(1) Luke, xxiv, 34.

RESOLUTIONS. From this day I will try to uproot the fault which is the habitual cause of all the others.

POINT II.

The Lord is risen indeed (1).

CONSIDERATIONS. *The Lord is risen INDEED*, — and not only in appearance, as Samuel was evoked by King Saul; not merely like Lazarus, who only lived for a time and then re-entered the grave; but He is risen *indeed*, to die no more. *Christ rising again from the dead*, says the Apostle, *dieth now no more, death shall no more have dominion over him (2).*

APPLICATIONS. Your spiritual resurrection should be the same. It must be real. It is essential that you should pass from a more or less lukewarm life to one of fervour, conformable in all things to whatever is demanded from you by God, in return for the many special favours you have received from His liberality. It is essential that the change for the better be continuous, and that by the grace of God you may not fall again into your past infidelities, nor into your past spiritual languor which little by little can throw your soul back again into the sleep of death.

AFFECTIONS. Ask God therefore, by the infinite merits of Jesus Christ, for a more resolute will, a more generous heart, a fervour which will be unchanging, and a devotion which will remain steadfast in all circumstances.

(1) Luke, XXIV, 34. — (2) Rom., VI, 9.

RESOLUTIONS. To avoid with greater care the most ordinary occasions of sin into which even good people fall, namely: long and unprofitable conversations; want of perseverance in the particular rules we have laid down for ourselves; neglect in mortifying the sight; excessive attachment to our own opinions, and a great many others which we must have learnt from experience.

POINT III.

The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon (1).

CONSIDERATIONS. Jesus is risen visibly. He proved beyond dispute that He had truly risen; that He had taken again the same Body that had been nailed to the Cross, and that had afterwards been placed in the sepulchre. He appeared to His Apostles and disciples, not merely once, but at various times during forty days. He allowed them to touch Him, and He ate with them, so that no doubt should remain in their minds.

APPLICATIONS. This should be the third work of your spiritual resurrection. It should be apparent not only to God, but also to the eyes of men, to your parents, brothers and sisters, to your friends, your inferiors and to all who live around you. They must perceive the change in you so that they may be edified, and rejoice that they no longer see those defects and grave negligences which had annoyed and pained them. It is essential that you should hencefor-

(1) Luke, xxiv. 34.

ward edify them as much and more than you may have pained them.

COLLOQUY. With Our Lord risen from the dead. — Rejoice with Him. — Lay at His feet the resolutions you have made during this meditation. — Humbly ask Him for grace to be faithful to them, and that henceforth you may walk *in newness of life* (1), more fervent and more fruitful in good works.

FRIDAY.

THE SEPULCHRE OF JESUS CHRIST

HAS BECOME GLORIOUS.

I. *Prelude.* Imagine the glory and joy which surround the holy sepulchre.

II. *Prelude.* Ask for grace to despise all that does not survive the grave.

POINT I.

The glory of the world ends at the grave for worldly men ; it commences there for Jesus and His faithful servants.

CONSIDERATIONS. What is there reserved for those men and women who have made worldly glory the motive for all their actions? Nothing but the oblivion of the grave. And if some of their names survive, what do they gain, asks St. Augustine, if they are praised where they are not and tormented where they are? Our Lord is entirely different, for throughout His life He sought nothing but the glory of His Father. He died a victim to His zeal and as the

(1) *Rom.*, vi. 4.

most despised of men, but the more He abased and humbled Himself, the greater His glory. It was at the sepulchre that His glory commenced, as had been foretold : *His sepulchre shall be glorious* (1). He left it, to be crowned in the highest heaven ; and the place where He was laid has ever since been visited and held in the highest honour by all men.

APPLICATIONS. Thus also, the faithful servants of Our Lord will be glorified ; those who have trodden underfoot the vain glory of the world and sought but the glory of God in all things. Perhaps unknown or despised by men, they will be glorified on the great day of the resurrection, and their sepulchre will also be glorious. They will go forth from it to receive the immortal crown of glory. We believe this and nevertheless, is not the desire for worldly praise and admiration partly, or in a great measure the motive of our intentions and even of our good works — even of our acts of humility ?

AFFECTIONS. Let us desire and implore that we may die wholly to self and vain glory in order to live for God alone.

RESOLUTIONS. To be indifferent both to the glory and contempt of the world. — To renew the purity of our intentions frequently.

POINT II.

Wealth and power end at the grave for worldly men ; they commence there for Jesus and His faithful servants.

CONSIDERATIONS. A famous prince, on feeling

(1) *Isaias*, xi, 10.

the approach of death complained : To-day I have in my possession treasures, palaces, an army to guard me, and to-morrow-nothing but the horror of the grave. This distressing thought is all that is left to a man who has placed his whole trust and happiness in the wealth and power of the world. It was very different with Our Lord, for after spending His entire life in poverty and voluntary obedience, He received fulness of life in the sepulchre, *the Father hath given all judgment to the Son* (1). *Whom he hath appointed heir of all things* (2).

APPLICATIONS. It will be the same with the faithful servants of Jesus who practise meekness united to entire self-renunciation, through His example and for love of Him. He Himself assures us of it : *Blessed are the poor in spirit : for theirs is the kingdom of heaven* (3). Rejoice that you have understood and followed the evangelical counsels; but be careful lest when you have detached your heart from the great possessions of the world, you do not become unduely attached to the small comforts of life. See whether you have anything with which to reproach yourself in this matter.

AFFECTIONS. Offerings to God of all the good things we possess in this world so that He may dispose of them as He wills. Ask for grace to make good use of them.

RESOLUTIONS. I will try to detach myself more and more from earthly possessions, so that my thoughts may readily rise to heavenly treasures.

(1) John, v, 22. — (2) Heb., i, 2. — (3) Matt., v, 3.

POINT III.

Joys and pleasures end at the grave for worldly men ; they commence there for Jesus and His faithful servants.

CONSIDERATIONS. How terrible is the fate of the man who has lived solely for his body, for the unworthy pleasures of the senses ! At the prospect of death, there is nothing left for him but the distressing thought which troubled St. Augustine so deeply and converted him : A few moments of pleasure and an eternity of torment ! There is no thought more terrible than that some day we must leave the grave to go, body and soul, into everlasting punishment. How different will be the fate of the faithful disciple of Our Saviour ! At the prospect of death he will say with his Master : *Consummatum est*. The sacrifice I made of the unworthy pleasures of the world is consummated. And all that it has cost me, O my God, *Thou hast turned...into joy* (1). He will say with the Apostle : *I have fought a good fight.... As to the rest, there is laid up for me a crown of justice which the Lord...will render to me in that day of the resurrection* (2).

APPLICATIONS. So long as your mind is enlightened by the light of faith, you will count the sacrifice of all material and earthly possessions as nothing, knowing that the harder the sacrifices made for God, the greater will be the joys you will receive for all eternity.

COLLOQUY. With Jesus risen from the dead and glorified.

(1) Ps. xxix, 12. — (2) II Tim., iv, 7-8.

SATURDAY.

OUR LADY

BEFORE AND AFTER THE RESURRECTION.

I. *Prelude.* Imagine Mary's joy when she first saw her Divine Son risen from the dead.

II. *Prelude.* Ask for grace to bear afflictions and privations so as to merit a share in the consolations of your blessed Mother.

POINT I. — MARY'S DESOLATION.

CONSIDERATIONS. Nothing is harder for a mother than to be violently parted from her only son. How great then must have been the sorrow and grief of Our Lady, the most loving of mothers, during the interval between the burial and the Resurrection of Jesus! How long the time must have appeared to her! No doubt it was spent in loving sighs and ardent longing to see her Son who had been so cruelly torn away from her.

APPLICATIONS. Deprived as I am during this exile of the sensible Presence of Jesus, do I sigh for the moment when I shall see Him in His glorified Humanity, and be united to Him for ever in heaven? I fear not. And why? Because I know and love Him only half-heartedly; because I am still too much attached to earth, and too fond of creatures.

AFFECTIONS. *O Jesus, Thou comfort of the pilgrim soul; let my sighs move Thee, and my manifold desolation here on earth; come, O*

come for without Thee no day nor hour shall be glad (1).

RESOLUTIONS. To fear and avoid any inordinate or material attachments.

POINT II. — MARY'S CONSOLATION.

CONSIDERATIONS. Imagine the widow of Naim's extreme joy when she embraced her son who had been miraculously brought to life and to her motherly love. The joy of the Blessed Virgin was such and infinitely greater when she beheld her Divine Son risen from the dead and glorified. This joy and interior happiness was in proportion to her large share in the sorrows and obloquy of Jesus, and consequently she knew that she would assuredly also share in His happiness and glory in heaven. To Mary can be applied these prophetic words of King David : *According to the multitude of my sorrows in my heart, thy comforts have given joy to my soul* (2).

APPLICATIONS. What good reason there is for you to be constant and generous in suffering, and even to be glad of the crosses which Jesus wishes you to carry after Him ; to rejoice when you receive ingratitude in return for benefits ; and to take every opportunity for mortifying your senses, your vanity and your self-love ! This, it is true, cannot be done without nature rebelling ; but in order to persevere think of the joys of the resurrection and of these words of the Apostle which are verified in the person of our Mother : *As you are partakers of the*

(1) *Imitation* : Book III, Chap. xxi. — (2) *Ps. xciii*, 19.

sufferings, so shall you be also of the consolation (1).

AFFECTIONS. Ask God to grant that you may keep in mind the joys of the resurrection through all your sufferings.

RESOLUTIONS. In times of desolation, I will trust in God rewarding my patience and resignation by bringing peace and joy after the trial and grief.

POINT III. — THE CONSOLATION AND GRIEF WHICH WERE EXPERIENCED ALTERNATELY BY MARY.

CONSIDERATIONS. There can be no doubt that Our Lord, Who appeared so frequently to His Apostles, appeared still more often to His holy Mother, and always filled her with fresh joy by His presence. But these appearances were of short duration, and we can imagine that the more His Presence filled her heart with joy, the greater was the void felt in her loving heart when He was absent. Therefore, she spent the forty days which elapsed between the Resurrection and the Ascension in alternate joy and sorrow, consolation and desolation.

APPLICATIONS. God usually deals thus with His servants. Sometimes He overwhelms them with His consolations by permitting them to feel the sweetness of His presence; at other times He leaves them alone in dryness of spirit and heart. You will frequently experience alternate consolation and desolation, spiritual visitations and abandonment. Profit by these

(1) II *Corin.*, i, 7

alternations of soul that you may grow strong and advance in the service of God ; this is the advice given by the masters of the spiritual life. See to what extent you have conformed to it, and what you must reform.

COLLOQUY. With our Blessed Lady. Repeat and meditate on the joyous anthem : « *Regina cœli, lætare, Alleluia* » ; *O, joy to thee, Queen of Heaven ! Alleluia !*

First week after Easter.

SUNDAY

THE HOLY WOMEN AT THE SEPULCHRE OF JESUS.

I. *Prelude.* Contemplate the holy women going to the Sepulchre to embalm the Body of Jesus.

II. *Prelude.* Ask for grace to grow in love, confidence and generosity.

POINT I. — THE DEPARTURE OF THE HOLY WOMEN

CONSIDERATIONS. The burial and embalming of the Body of Jesus had been done hastily owing to the Jewish Sabbath, which began on Friday at sunset. The holy women, so well known as the three Marys, were : Mary Magdalene, Mary, the mother of James, and Mary Salome — and their great anxiety was to go to the Sepulchre at dawn on the day following the Sabbath to embalm the Body of their beloved Master anew with every possible care. *Mary Magdalen*, says St. Mark, and *Mary*

the mother of James, and Salome... coming... very early in the morning... to the Sepulchre, the sun being now risen (1).

APPLICATIONS. With good reason you admire the fearless courage, the eagerness and boldness of these holy women who leave the city alone at such an early hour to climb Calvary, to go straight to the Sepulchre, regardless of the soldiers guarding it. What makes them so eager and courageous? It is their love. O! if you were filled with the same ardour of Divine love, how much you would undertake and perform for the glory of God and the salvation of souls! With what constancy and perfection you would fulfil all your devotions and all your duties! Your progress in all virtues would be wonderful for love makes everything easy and never thinks it has done enough.

AFFECTIONS. Earnestly pray that God may kindle the fire of His Divine love in your lukewarm heart.

RESOLUTIONS. Frequently to say the favourite ejaculatory prayer of St. Ignatius : Give me, Lord, Thy love and Thy grace ; these are sufficient ; with them I am rich.

POINT II. — THE DIFFICULTIES OF THE HOLY WOMEN.

CONSIDERATIONS. The enormous stone which had been placed at the entrance to the Sepulchre by the chief priests and the Pharisees, and sealed with their seal, must have seemed

(1) Mark, xvi, 1-2.

an insuperable obstacle to the pious project of the holy women. They thought of it as they went along, and said to each other : *Who shall roll us back the stone from the door of the Sepulchre* (1)? But without seeking a solution to the difficulty, they continued on their way, solely occupied with the thought of rendering their last duties to their beloved Master.

APPLICATIONS. In fulfilling orders of obedience, labour for souls or good resolutions, you also will sometimes meet unforeseen difficulties which at first will appear insurmountable to you. Be on your guard against yielding to discouragement. Rather imitate these holy women ; go forward with blind confidence, doing what you can, convinced that God will do the rest if it be necessary for His glory or for the good of souls. Have you done this?

AFFECTIONS. Thank God for having sustained you on so many occasions when you would assuredly have failed had it not been for the assistance of His grace. Ask for absolute confidence in His power and infinite Goodness

RESOLUTIONS. To acquire the habit of having immediate recourse to prayer in difficult circumstances, and in temptations of pusillanimity.

POINT III. — THE ARRIVAL OF THE HOLY WOMEN
AT THE SEPULCHRE.

CONSIDERATIONS. When the holy women arrived at the Sepulchre, *they saw*, says

(1) Mark, xvi, 3.

St. Mark, *the stone rolled back* (1). God intervened with a miracle in favour of these women who showed so much love and perseverance, for as they approached the Sepulchre, an earthquake rolled away the stone from the entrance to the holy Sepulchre, and put the soldiers to flight (2).

APPLICATIONS. Thus does God miraculously assist those who trust in Him, and who, often contrary to all the laws of human wisdom, hope in Him against all hope. This is the expression used by St. Paul in speaking of the faith of Abraham : *Who against hope believed in hope* (3). We must certainly not neglect human means ; but our confidence in the goodness and omnipotence of God must surpass human wisdom and in many cases silence it. See to what extent your conduct has been in accordance with this trust which should so greatly contribute to your progress, and to the good you are called upon to do.

COLLOQUY. With the holy women.

(1) Mark. xvi, 4.

(2) St. Matthew relates the fact with its details in these words *And behold there was a great earthquake. For an angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and coming, rolled back the stone... And for fear of him the guards were struck with terror and became as dead men... some of the guards came into the city, and told the chief priests all things that had been done. And they being assembled together with the ancients, taking counsel, gave a great sum of money to the soldiers saying : Say you his disciples came by night and stole him away when we were asleep... So they did as they were taught ; and this word was spread abroad among the Jews even unto this day.* (Chap. xxviii, 2-15)

(3) Rom., iv, 18.

MONDAY.

The appearance of Our Lord.

AN ANGEL ANNOUNCES THE RESURRECTION
OF JESUS CHRIST
TO THE HOLY WOMEN.

I. *Prelude.* Imagine the empty Sepulchre, and the astonishment and joy of the holy women.

II. *Prelude.* Ask for spiritual joy and for love of Jesus.

POINT I. — THE ANGEL REASSURES THE HOLY WOMEN.

CONSIDERATIONS. The earthquake aroused fear and uneasiness in the hearts of the holy women, and they did not know what to do. But the angel of the Lord was there to reassure and enlighten them : *Fear not you, he says, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified* (1). Observe that this same angel who reassures and consoles the holy women is the one who terrified the soldiers who guarded the sepulchre, and put them to flight. What is the reason for this difference? Because the soldiers' intentions were evil, whilst those of Mary Magdalen and her companions were worthy of all praise. Then notice why he tells them not to fear : because they *seek Jesus who was crucified*.

APPLICATIONS. Whenever fear or uneasiness takes possession of you go to Jesus crucified : pray for some moments before the crucifix,

(1) Matt., XXVIII, 5.

and you will regain your peace and strength of soul.

AFFECTIONS. Shame and repentance for having so often sought peace and joy of soul in creatures.

RESOLUTIONS. In trials and difficulties, I will pour out my heart at the foot of the Cross of Jesus.

POINT II.

THE ANGEL ANNOUNCES OUR LORD'S RESURRECTION TO THE HOLY WOMEN.

CONSIDERATIONS. Not only does the angel reassure the holy women, but he announces the great mystery of the Resurrection to them : *Why seek you the living with the dead (1)... He is not here, for He is risen as he said. Come, and see the place where the Lord was laid (2).* The proof given by the angel in support of the wonderful mystery of the Resurrection is wholly convincing : *He is not there ; He is no longer in the Sepulchre.* And in truth, adds St. Luke, *going in, they found not the body of the Lord Jesus (3).*

APPLICATIONS. How happy you would be, and what joy would be given to all those who have your dearest interests at heart, if by rising spiritually with Jesus you became wholly changed ; if your words and your conduct proved to all that you had come forth from the tomb of your evil habits and your numerous imperfections ! All this is in your power ; it is only necessary to unite your efforts to the oper-

(1) Luke, xxiv, 5. — (2) Matt., xxviii, 6. — (3) Luke, xxiv, 3.

ations of grace; but they must be constant efforts. During these holy days this grace is offered you in great abundance, more so than at any other time of the year.

AFFECTIONS. Implore the assistance of grace with fervour and with the utmost confidence in order that you may fulfil the Apostle's precept perfectly : *Stripping yourselves of the old man with his deeds* (1).

RESOLUTIONS. I will strive to uproot the fault which is the greatest obstacle to my spiritual progress.

POINT III. — THE ANGEL CHARGES THE HOLY WOMEN
TO ANNOUNCE THE RESURRECTION TO THE APOSTLES.

CONSIDERATIONS. *And going quickly*, continued the angel, *tell ye his disciples that he is risen* (2). Consider and marvel at the goodness of Our Divine Lord. On the day of His Passion, all His disciples had cowardly abandoned Him; and after His death they had implicitly denied the prediction of His resurrection by giving way to excessive sadness, as if they thought their Divine Master's cause and their own were hopeless. But nevertheless Our Lord sends them consolation by means of His angel and the holy women. We would think they only deserved neglect and punishment, yet Jesus overwhelms them with favours. The goodness of His Heart prevails over everything.

APPLICATIONS. Acknowledge that it is solely to this same loving-kindness that you are indebted for so many natural and supernatural

(1) Col., iii, 9. — (2) Matt., xxviii, 7.

graces, though you may have saddened the Heart of Jesus for many years by your sins, and though since your conversion or at least for a considerable time, you have been so lukewarm in your love of Him.

COLLOQUY. With Jesus. — Condemn and regret the past. — Fervent protestations of love and devotion. — Offer Him your good resolutions. — Confess your weakness. — Ask for assistance.

TUESDAY.

JESUS

APPEARS TO ST. MARY MAGDALENE.

I. *Prelude.* See St. Mary Magdalene in contemplation before the Sepulchre, and Our risen Lord appearing to her.

II. *Prelude.* Ask for grace to participate in her faith, love and joy.

POINT I. — MARY MAGDALENE REMAINS ALONE NEAR
THE HOLY SEPULCHRE.

CONSIDERATIONS. While the other two Maries returned to Jerusalem to announce the good tidings, Magdalene remained motionless and in tears at the entrance to the Sepulchre. *Mary*, says St. John, *stood at the Sepulchre without weeping* (1). Love kept her there, oblivious to all else, near the place where Jesus, her Divine Master, the sole object of her love, had lain. It was as though she saw Him, was at His feet and conversed with Him. Loving sighs escaped her, and she wept, wholly absorbed in her Beloved.

(1) John, xx, 11.

APPLICATIONS. In St. Mary Magdalene we see the living representation of a soul in contemplation. We, unfortunately, do not yet know much of this form of prayer designated by ascetics under the name of contemplation. Yet it should be easy for us when we are in the Sanctuary, away from distractions and the turmoil of the world. How is it we are deprived of such a great grace? Thomas a Kempis answers : *For this reason are there so few contemplative men, for that few can wholly abstract themselves from things created and perishing* (1).

AFFECTIONS. Humble yourself profoundly before God because you are as yet so unprofitable, so material and worldly. — Aspire to a more intimate union with God, to greater perfection in prayer.

RESOLUTIONS. To renounce every attachment which is too human. — To conform to the advice given by St. Paul to the Colossians : *If you be risen with Christ, seek the things that are above... mind... not the things that are upon the earth* (2).

POINT II. — TWO ANGELS APPEAR TO ST. MARY MAGDALENE.

CONSIDERATIONS. While St. Mary Magdalene, absorbed in contemplation, keeps her eyes fixed on the interior of the holy Sepulchre, there suddenly appear to her, according to the Gospel *two angels in white sitting, one at the head, and one at the feet, where the body of Jesus had been laid. They say to her : Woman, why weepest thou? She saith to them :*

(1) *Imitation* : Book III, Chap. xxxi. — (2) *Col.*, iii, 1-2.

Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him (1).

APPLICATIONS. The sole cause of St. Mary Magdalene's grief and sadness then is that she has lost the sensible Presence of Jesus. How happy I should be if the sole cause, or at least, the chief cause of my troubles and grief were the loss of the sensible Presence of Jesus, devotion to the spouse of my soul; not to experience as in times of fervour, the effects of His Presence, effects which have given me so much courage in trials, and enabled me to enjoy so much happiness and consolation in the practice of the most difficult virtues.

AFFECTIONS. With shame I shall ask forgiveness for having so often resented material privations, and for being so indifferent to the privations of grace.

RESOLUTIONS. Convinced that love for God is not measured by sensible devotion, but according to the fervour with which we serve Him, I will try to maintain and increase this in every possible way.

POINT III. — JESUS APPEARS TO ST. MARY MAGDALENE.

CONSIDERATIONS. Jesus, Who was invisibly present at the manifestations of Magdalene's sorrow, love and fervent desires, was pleased with them. When she turned round seeking everywhere for her well-beloved, *she saw Jesus standing*, says St. John, *and she knew not that it was Jesus... She thinking that it was the gardener, saith to him : Sir, if thou hast taken him hence, tell me where thou hast*

(1) John, xx. 12-13.

laid him, and I will take him away. Jesus saith to her : Mary... She turning... at that single word, recognises Jesus, and falls at his feet saith to him : Rabboni (which is to say, Master) (1).

APPLICATIONS. How instructive and consoling is this apparition of Our Lord, the first mentioned in the Gospel. To whom does He appear? To a penitent sinner! How has she merited such predilection, such a signal favour? First, by the generosity of her love. Secondly, by her great share in the Passion of Our Lord. Thirdly, by her ardent desire to see Jesus and by her perseverance in seeking Him. Awaken in your heart a desire to see Jesus glorified in heaven; often tell Him that you love Him, and prove your love by generosity in His service. Thus, whatever your past infidelities, you will assuredly participate abundantly in His Divine favours.

COLLOQUY. With St. Mary Magdalene. Rejoice with her on having been the first, after our Lady, to be favoured by the sight of the risen Jesus, and beg her to obtain for you the holy dispositions which are so greatly rewarded by Him.

WEDNESDAY.

JESUS APPEARS

TO THE OTHER TWO HOLY WOMEN.

I *Prelude*. Imagine the surprise and joy of the two Marys.

II. *Prelude*. Ask for grace to obtain some share in the special favours of Jesus.

(1) John, xx, 14-16.

POINT I. — MARY THE MOTHER OF JAMES, AND MARY SALOME
RETURN TO THE CITY.

CONSIDERATIONS. The angel had commanded the holy women to announce Our Lord's Resurrection to the disciples. This could be accomplished without all three undertaking it. Moreover, as we have seen, St. Mary Magdalene remained near the Sepulchre to give vent to her love and devotion by tears. The other two Marys on the other hand, set out in haste towards Jerusalem where the disciples were in hiding. *And they went out quickly from the Sepulchre*, says St. Matthew... *running to tell his disciples* what they had seen (1). They too received their reward, for they were favoured by the appearance of Jesus.

APPLICATIONS. It is obvious from these two incidents that it is not to this or that action, of itself, that merit and reward are attached, but to the motive which urges us to act, and to the intention accompanying the action. For instance, if having some spare time, you retire to pray, or to read some spiritual work, and that another time you prefer to fulfil an act of charity or to attend to some useful work, there will be equal merit and reward for either action if there has been the same love in the motive and intention.

AFFECTIONS. Gratitude to the Divine Goodness which, though we are allowed to follow our inclinations in many cases, nevertheless leaves no act unrewarded when it is done with the intention of pleasing God.

(1) Matt , xxviii. 8.

RESOLUTIONS. To act with a supernatural motive in all things. — To renew good resolutions frequently.

POINT II. — JESUS APPEARS TO THE HOLY WOMEN
ON THE ROAD.

CONSIDERATIONS. The promptness with which Mary the mother of James, and Mary Salome obeyed the command given them by the angel to return to the city, was magnificently rewarded. For while they walked in great haste, *behold*, says St. Matthew, *Jesus met them saying : All hail. But they came up and took hold of his feet and adored him. Then Jesus said to them : Fear not. Go, tell my brethren that they go into Galilee, there they shall see me* (1).

APPLICATIONS. How gracious the Lord is towards those who love Him! How eager He is to reward whatever is done for Him in the spirit of faith or obedience! What sweetness, what loving kindness in the words, *All hail fear not!* And also in these words: *Tell my brethren.* He gives this name to those who had cowardly abandoned Him and even denied Him! What meekness and forgetfulness of insults, of all their past guilt!

AFFECTIONS. Admire the infinite longanimity of your Divine Lord. Adore Him, throwing yourself at His feet with the holy women. Declare your love and eternal devotion.

RESOLUTIONS. To imitate as much as possible, the unutterable gentleness of Jesus by forgetting offences, and by rendering good for evil.

(1) Matt., xxviii, 9-10.

POINT III. — THE DISCIPLES DO NOT BELIEVE THE NARRATIVE OF THE HOLY WOMEN.

CONSIDERATIONS. On hearing the narrative of the two Marys, the disciples did not believe it. *And these words seemed to them as idle tales; and they did not believe them* (1). St. Luke affirms this. Nevertheless, there is no doubt whatever that Our Lord had predicted to them in clear and definite words on various occasions, that He would be put to death, and had said on *the third day he shall rise again* (2). Were they then obstinate unbelievers? No; but their faith was held as it were, captive. They doubted practically but not systematically.

APPLICATIONS. Cannot the same be said of you many times? You believe that always and every where God sees you and watches you, and yet you do so many things which displease Him. You believe in these words of Jesus : *As long as you did it to one of these my least brethren, you did it to me* (3). And yet you judge Him, despise and grieve Him in the person of your neighbour. You are not a systematic but a practical unbeliever in a greater or lesser degree. Where will this lead you? What should you think of it? Repent and make resolutions. Ask for grace to be faithful to them.

COLLOQUY. With our loving Saviour *who was delivered up for our sins*, says St. Paul, and *rose again for our justification* (4). Give thanks to Him, glorify Him and beg Him to

(1) Luke, xxiv, 11. — (2) Mark, x, 34 — (3) Matt., xxv, 40. — (4) Rom., iv, 25.

raise us with Him to a new life ; to stimulate our faith, and make it fruitful, so that it may become active and manifest through good works.

THURSDAY.

THE TWO APOSTLES ST. PETER AND ST. JOHN

MAKE THEIR WAY TO THE SEPULCHRE.

I. *Prelude.* See the two Apostles hurrying towards the holy Sepulchre.

II. *Prelude.* Ask for grace to gain much fruit from the splendid example given by the Apostles.

POINT I. — ST. PETER AND ST. JOHN GO TO THE HOLY SEPULCHRE.

CONSIDERATIONS. The Apostles did not all refuse in the same degree to believe the narrative of the holy women. St. Peter and St. John resolved to go to the Sepulchre to ascertain the truth of the matter for themselves. *Peter therefore went out, and that other disciple, says St. John, speaking here of himself, and they came to the Sepulchre* (1). What did the two Apostles do on this occasion? What we should always do. They followed the impulse of their conscience and reason without considering what the others might think or say.

APPLICATIONS. How happy should I be had my conduct always been like theirs consulting only God, my conscience, and my duties, in all things. But how many times have I adopted the

(1) John. xx. 3.

actions and speech of imperfect Christians, through human respect, cowardice, or because in them I found an excuse for my lukewarmness? Examine yourself, and see what your conscience tells you.

AFFECTIONS. Ask God to enlighten you, and to give you the courage and strength you require in order to act henceforward not according to what others do or do not do, but according to your conscience, your duty, and the desire you should have to advance continually in the path of Christian perfection.

Practical RESOLUTIONS in accordance with the preceding *Affections*.

POINT II. — THEY HASTEN THEIR STEPS AS THEY
APPROACH THEIR DESTINATION.

CONSIDERATIONS. As the Apostles approached the Sepulchre they hastened their steps; or rather, they no longer walked, but as the Gospel says : *they both ran together* (1), so eager were they to arrive at the Sepulchre to know what had become of their beloved Master. Love gave them wings and unusual strength.

APPLICATIONS. Do you act with similar promptness and energy in matters relating to God, in all that is demanded of you by your duties and by the resolutions you made under the inspiration of grace and in accordance with the advice of your director? If you can affirm this, rejoice, for it is a proof of your fervour. If, on the contrary, after examining yourself, you must confess that you are dilatory in carrying out your intentions, that you often

(1) John, xx, 4.

forget them and that you are losing ground rather than making progress, then shake off this numbness, and redouble your fervour in order to recover the time you have lost, and to spare yourself vain regrets in the end.

AFFECTIONS. Ask God to help you to understand the reproof which was once addressed to the Bishop of Ephesus by the Holy Spirit : *I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first charity* (1), so that you may see to what extent you may deserve this reproof.

RESOLUTIONS. To amend our past negligences. — To try to grow in fervour as we advance in years.

POINT III. — ST. JOHN ALLOWS ST. PETER TO HAVE THE HONOUR OF FIRST ENTERING INTO THE SEPULCHRE.

CONSIDERATIONS. St. John was younger and swifter than St. Peter, and *came first to the Sepulchre* ; nevertheless, as he tells us himself, *he went not in first*, out of deference to St. Peter who had been given the supremacy of honour and jurisdiction by Our Lord. When they both entered they found, to their great surprise only the napkin that had been about his *head lying with the linen cloths* (2), which had enveloped the body of Jesus.

APPLICATIONS. Although St. Peter, through culpable weakness, had sinned grievously by denying Jesus as often as three times, St. John did not show him any the less the honour and respect which were due to him as his superior. Let us like the beloved disciple, learn to see in

(1) *Apor.*, II, 4. — (2) John, XX, 7.

those who have authority over us, not man who is subject to the imperfections and miseries of humanity, but the representative of God, remembering Our Lord's words : *He that heareth you, heareth me, and he that despiseth you, despiseth me* (1). Have my judgments, words and actions been always in accordance with this doctrine? This is a most important question.

COLLOQUY. With the beloved disciple. — I shall earnestly beg him to obtain for me as I grow older, an ever increasing faith, humility and fervour in the service of God.

FRIDAY.

JESUS APPEARS TO ST. PETER.

I. *Prelude.* Imagine the Apostle when he first sees his Divine Master.

II. *Prelude.* Earnestly ask for grace to share in the devotion which then filled his heart.

POINT I. -- ST. PETER RETURNS FROM THE HOLY SEPULCHRE WITH MEASURED STEPS.

CONSIDERATIONS. While St. John hurriedly returned to Jerusalem to rejoin the disciples, and to make that which he had seen known to them, St. Peter followed him slowly, *wondering in himself*, says St. Luke, *at that which was come to pass* (2), meditating on all the wonders which had taken place at the sepulchre of his Divine Master, hope and fear, joy and sorrow, love and contrition contending for mastery within his heart.

(1) Luke, x, 6. — (2) Luke, xxiv, 12.

APPLICATIONS. What a good example you are given here. Often you are quite alone working, travelling, going from one place to another in town or in the country. Recall then like St. Peter some mystery of our faith, the subject of your meditation, or your spiritual reading of the morning, and tender affections and devotion will often be aroused in your heart. There are many reasons for urging you to make an effort to acquire this habit. Try for some days beginning from to-day, and its success will exceed your expectations.

AFFECTIONS. Shame and sorrow for being usually so little recollected, so seldom occupied with good and holy thoughts.

RESOLUTIONS. To aim at greater recollection and a more interior life.

POINT II. — JESUS MANIFESTE HIMSELF TO ST. PETER.

CONSIDERATIONS. *He was seen by Cephas; and after that by the eleven* (1). From these definite words of St. Paul, there is no doubt whatever that St. Peter was the first amongst all the Apostles who was favoured by the appearance of the risen Saviour. How wonderful! St. John the beloved disciple, had accompanied Jesus to Calvary, had heard Him draw His last breath, and yet, it was not to him that Our Lord appeared, but to St. Peter who had publicly denied his Master! We can imagine that this special favour was accompanied by the kindest of words, which dissipated every doubt in the mind of the penitent Apostle concerning his forgiveness for the past.

(1) I *Corin.*, xv, 5.

APPLICATIONS. What conclusion should you draw from Our Lord's conduct towards His repentant Apostle? That God forgives as God ; that is to say, perfectly, without reserve and without bitterness ; that He loves and even caresses the repentant sinner as though he never offended Him. This is the observation made by St. Augustine : « For the gifts of God are without repentance. »

AFFECTIONS. Repeat and appreciate these beautiful words of the holy penitent King : *Bless the Lord, O my soul, Who forgiveth all thy iniquities...; Who redeemeth thy life from destruction : Who crowneth thee with mercy and compassion* (1).

RESOLUTIONS. I will never despair of gaining the friendship of God even if I should have had the misfortune to fall into grave sin, and I will always renounce every thought which tends to inspire doubt regarding the forgiveness of my sins after I have approached the Sacrament of penance in good faith.

POINT III. — ST. PETER CONFIRMS HIS BRETHREN
IN THE FAITH.

CONSIDERATIONS. *He was seen by Cephas; and after that by the eleven* (2). What is the reason for this preference, this distinction accorded to St. Peter in spite of his fall? Doubtless it was to restore him in the estimation of the other Apostles, and to preserve his authority as head of the apostolic college. We see, in fact, that St. Peter's testimony was at once

(1) Ps. cii, 2-4. — (2) I Corin., xv, 5.

received : they all believed it and exclaimed : — *The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon* (1). In this way Peter commenced to fulfil the mission confided to him by Jesus : *And thou being once converted, confirm thy brethren* (2).

APPLICATIONS. How good and gracious is the Lord in the dispositions of His Providence for all men and in all things. Praise Him, bless Him, and try to conform to His example. Thus when your duty compels you to reprove some one to whom respect is due, be careful to preserve his authority and influence. Never reprove him in public unless it is necessary as a reparation for scandal which has been given. Be on your guard always against censuring him before others in his absence, and do not speak of his faults even in confidence. How have you observed these rules of conduct?

COLLOQUY. With St. Peter. — Rejoice with him. — Ask him to obtain for you the grace to share in the respect, humility, ardent and unutterable love which he experienced when he recognised Jesus.

SATURDAY.

JESUS

APPEARS TO THE DISCIPLES AT EMMAUS

I. *Prelude.* See Jesus walking with His two disciples, unrecognised by them.

II. *Prelude.* Ask for grace to walk ever in the presence of God.

(1) Luke, XXIV, 34. — (2) Id., XXII, 32.

POINT I. — THE TWO DISCIPLES GO FROM JERUSALEM
TO EMMAUS.

CONSIDERATIONS. St. Luke relates that towards evening on the day of the Resurrection two disciples of the Saviour *went... to a town which was sixty furlongs from Jerusalem named Emmaus* (1), that is about six miles, where one of them owned some property. No doubt their idea was to take a walk as a distraction, to recover from the painful emotions and the deep sadness which overwhelmed them through the condemnation, Passion and Death of their beloved Master. This was the subject of their conversation as they went along. The words of the Evangelist confirm this supposition: *And they talked together of all these things which had happened* (2).

APPLICATIONS. To allow ourselves honest recreation or distraction, to seek relief and comfort when sorrow and sadness oppress our souls, is not prohibited nor even incompatible with Christian perfection. But where do we seek for consolation? Is it not very often in long and frivolous conversations, in dissipation of mind, in light reading and, what is more dangerous, in pleasures of the senses which have often been fatal to us. This is a grievous and deplorable mistake. True consolation is not found in creatures apart from God. Have you not discovered this more than once?

AFFECTIONS. Acknowledgment and repentance.

RESOLUTIONS. Always to unite a good inten-

(1) Luke, xxiv, 13. — (2) *Id.*, 14.

tion and the thought of God's presence with our relations and recreations. — To have recourse to Him by prayer in all our trials and desolations.

POINT II. — JESUS JOINS THEM WITHOUT MAKING HIMSELF KNOWN.

CONSIDERATIONS. *And it came to pass, continues St. Luke, that while they talked and reasoned with themselves, Jesus Himself also drawing near, went with them. But their eyes were held that they should not know him (1).* Our Divine Master joined the incredulous disciples out of charity and zeal, to save them from their errors, to instruct and console them, to establish and confirm them in the way of truth; in a word, to be of service to them.

APPLICATIONS. This should be our aim in all our conversations. Opportunities to make them helpful will not fail us, for there are many we meet who are full of fatal prejudices, whom we can enlighten. Also we can persuade those who are overwhelmed with misfortunes and domestic troubles, to have recourse to the comfort of religion. It may easily be in our power to bring back those who neglect their religious duties to the right path by a few well chosen words. Be zealous, and you will find the way to make your conversations helpful; you will be a preacher and an apostle, without causing any annoyance. Have you no negligences to reproach yourself with in his respect? See how you can amend them.

AFFECTIONS. Arouse in your heart an ardent

(1) Luke, xxiv, 15-16.

desire to contribute to the well-being and spiritual progress of those around you especially those who have been confided to your care.

RESOLUTIONS. After conversations of some length, I will examine myself both on the faults I may have committed, and on the way in which my conversations can be made more helpful.

POINT III. — JESUS QUESTIONS HIS DISCIPLES.

CONSIDERATIONS. *What are these discourses that you hold one with another as you walk and are sad?... And they said : Concerning Jesus... and how our chief priests and princes delivered him to be condemned to death, and crucified him. But we hoped that it was he that should have redeemed Israel* (1). Why did Our Lord question the disciples when He knew their most secret thoughts? In order to hear from their own lips the confession of the erroneous and worldly ideas they had formed of the promised Messias, and the better to enlighten and undeceive them; to reprove them more helpfully, and in this way to correct them more effectually.

APPLICATIONS. Learn by this what you should do when you are obliged to reprove anyone's mistakes, and to correct them. You should endeavour by questioning them, to draw from their own lips the acknowledgment of their faults, showing them its gravity and fatal consequences. Only then will they be disposed to receive correction; it will be a real help and

(1) Luke, xxiv, 17-21.

you will confer a true and lasting benefit. Is it not on account of your failure to follow this wise rule of conduct, that you have more than once exasperated rather than converted the one you had to reprove?

COLLOQUY. With the risen Jesus. Matter will be found for this in the *Affections* and *Resolutions* of the first two Points.

Second week after Easter.

SUNDAY.

ON THE GOSPEL FOR THE DAY :

« I AM THE GOOD SHEPHERD ».

I. *Prelude.* Hear Our loving Saviour saying to us. *I am the Good Shepherd.*

II. *Prelude.* Ask for grace to understand the love of the Sacred Heart of Jesus in order to imitate it.

POINT I. — JESUS SAYS TO THE PHARISEES :

« I AM THE GOOD SHEPHERD (1) ».

CONSIDERATIONS. By these words and under this symbol so full of tenderness, Our Lord desires to manifest the love enshrined in His Heart in order to attract the hearts of all men to Himself. — Imagine a good shepherd surrounded by his sheep. Penetrate into his heart and see what are his feelings towards them. In the first place, is there not tender solicitude? Day and night he thinks of his beloved sheep, and is ever watchful to guard them from every disaster. Then, is there not unbounded tender-

(1) John, x, 11.

ness? If, in spite of his vigilance, one sheep strays away, he cannot rest for a moment until he brings it back to the fold; and if there is any sickness among the flock he tends them in their sufferings. Is there not also ardent love and perfect devotion? His joy is to be with his sheep, to feed them and to provide for all their needs.

APPLICATIONS. Apply these considerations to Jesus Who is above all others the Shepherd of our souls, and you will find this same devotion in His Heart, but purified and manifested in an infinitely more perfect degree. Did He not forget Himself in order to think of us alone? Did He not become poor to make us rich? Did He not deliver Himself up to death to give us life?

AFFECTIONS. Express your gratitude for so much love, devotion and sacrifice, and declare your desire to find means to render unto Him love for love, sacrifice for sacrifice, life for life.

RESOLUTIONS. In my trials and temptations I will have recourse to the Good Shepherd of my soul.

POINT II. — « I KNOW MY SHEEP AND MINE KNOW ME (1). »

CONSIDERATIONS. What does Our Lord mean by these words : *I know my sheep*? That He knows the secrets of our hearts; that amongst Christians He discerns clearly between those who only appear to have the qualities of good sheep, and those who have them in reality; between those who are merely His disciples in the sight of men and deceive them, and those

(1) John, x, 14.

who are also disciples in the sight of His heavenly Father Who cannot be deceived.

APPLICATIONS. Penetrated with these truths, examine yourself; ask yourself if Jesus can recognise in you one of His faithful flock. These are the distinguishing marks : Good sheep seek the company of the Shepherd; do you love to be near Jesus? Do you visit Him often and lovingly in the Blessed Sacrament? The sheep is docile to the voice of the shepherd : are you docile also to the voice of Jesus Who speaks by good inspirations, by your director, your parents or your superiors? The good sheep is distinguished by simplicity, candour and gentleness : are you not prone on the contrary to dissimulation, envy and hardness? By these signs you can judge yourself, and see what remains for you to do.

AFFECTIONS. Ask for grace to appreciate even more thoroughly the qualities of a good sheep of the Divine Shepherd, and to perfect them in yourself.

RESOLUTIONS. To strive to destroy in yourself all that is opposed to the qualities of a faithful sheep.

POINT III. — « AND I LAY DOWN MY LIFE FOR MY SHEEP (1). »

CONSIDERATIONS. *But the hireling and he that is not the shepherd* says Jesus, is only faithful to his duties so long as they cost him no trouble nor sacrifices. When he seeth the wolf coming instead of shielding them, he leaveth the sheep and flieth... because he is a hireling.

The good shepherd on the contrary exposes, and if necessary, giveth his life for his sheep... I am the Good Shepherd... and I lay down my life for my sheep (1).

APPLICATIONS. The contrast between the two shepherds is immense. How is this? Because the one acts merely from motives of interest, while the other is guided by motives of love and conscience. Under the first figure, Our Lord depicts and condemns the Pharisees who placed their own interests and comforts above the care that should have been given to the people who were confided to their care and zeal. Under the second figure, Jesus depicts Himself and suggests Himself as a model, seeking only the glory of His heavenly Father and the good of souls. Examine yourself seriously; your most secret intentions, the motives which inspire your words and actions, and make some generous resolutions in consequence. Humbly ask that you may be true to them.

COLLOQUY. With the Divine and Good Shepherd of your soul.

MONDAY.

JESUS REPROVES AND INSTRUCTS

THE TWO DISCIPLES ON THE WAY TO EMMAUS.

I. *Prelude.* Hear Jesus speaking to the two disciples.

II. *Prelude.* Ask for grace to profit by the lessons He gives them.

POINT I. — JESUS REPROACHES THE DISCIPLES
WITH THEIR INCREDULITY.

CONSIDERATIONS. Jesus, hearing from the

(1) John, x, 11-15.

very lips of the disciples the avowal of their incredulity and their prejudices, reproves them severely : *O foolish, and slow of heart to believe in all things which the prophets have spoken*, He says (1). The reproof is certainly given in vigorous terms, but without anger or bitterness. And the disciples accepts it from this stranger without indignation or rejoinder, for they feel that it is dictated by charity.

APPLICATIONS. When charitable people or those who are responsible for your conduct have admonished you regarding your faults, or reproved you in vigorous terms to make you realise your wrong-doings, and understand the dangers of your path, have you imitated the humble docility of the disciples of Emmaus? Have you at least had the good sense to believe that the advice and reproofs have been solely dictated by charity or duty? Have you had sufficient humility to refrain from replying or becoming angry or from having recourse to interminable excuses? Perhaps on the contrary, you have imitated the sick man who flies into a passion with his doctor when he tells him of the gravity of his illness, or prescribes stringent but indispensable remedies. What reason for shame and holy indignation against yourself were this supposition a reality!

AFFECTIONS. Thank God for having given you watchful parents who by wise severity have prevented you contracting bad habits, above all those which can only be corrected with difficulty. Ask for grace to be docile to the advice of your spiritual director, and all

(1) Luke, xxiv, 25

those who have your best interests at heart.

RESOLUTIONS. If I should show anger when I am corrected, I will hasten to apologise to those who have done it as a duty or out of charity, and will beg them to continue this service.

POINT II. — JESUS CORRECTS AND INSTRUCTS THE DISCIPLES.

CONSIDERATIONS. That the reproof may be of real value, it is necessary for the culprit to recognise his fault; therefore he must be instructed. This is what our Divine Lord did, by showing the two disciples that according to the prophecies the Messiah should, contrary to their hopes, establish His kingdom on humility and self sacrifice : *Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and so to enter into his glory* (1) ?

APPLICATIONS. This then is the path clearly indicated by the infallible Truth, that can and must alone lead to heavenly glory : the way of the Cross. Can I pretend to be wiser or better than my Master and my King? To attain immortal glory without struggle and suffering, by leading an easy and idle life? This would be the height of absurdity; it would be madness.

AFFECTIONS. Deplore your errors and past folly. Thank God for opening your eyes to the Truth. — Humble yourself profoundly before your loving Saviour for having, until now, done and suffered so little for Him.

RESOLUTIONS. To undertake with renewed

(1) Luke, xxiv, 26

fervour, the practices of penance and mortification we undertook with the approval of our spiritual director.

POINT III. — JESUS EXPLAINS THE MEANING
OF THE SCRIPTURES TO THE DISCIPLES.

CONSIDERATIONS. *And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things that were concerning him,* says St. Luke (1). Why does Our Lord enter into this long exposition of the prophetic writings when He might have illumined the minds, and kindled the hearts of the two disciples by a single ray of His grace? To teach us that by assiduous and attentive reading of the Scriptures and spiritual works, we can obtain and preserve in ourselves the light and unction of grace.

APPLICATIONS. Even in your Communions is not your want of light and faith, due to your neglect of spiritual reading, or in that you do it superficially, with carelessness or as a matter of habit? Examine yourself; and if you find you are guilty, resolve to amend such an important point of the spiritual life. Do not pass one day without reading, at least, some passages of the *Imitation*. Some people have the custom of opening this precious treasury of the interior life at random, and of reading attentively the page to the right or left, according to their decision beforehand. This practice has the advantage of rousing attention, and those who are familiar with it affirm that often they

(1) Luke, xxiv, 27.

come across sentences or maxims which seem to be expressly written to enlighten, sustain, encourage or comfort them under particular circumstances. See how this practice can be of use to you ; is it not worth a trial ?

COLLOQUY. With our loving Saviour, our Divine Guide and our beneficent Teacher. In the *Affections* and *Resolutions* of the first two Points will be found ample substance for this colloquy.

TUESDAY.

THE DISCIPLES PERSUADE JESUS

TO ACCEPT THEIR HOSPITALITY.

I *Prelude*. See the three wayfarers entering Emmaus.

II. *Prelude*. Beseech our Lord to accept the hospitality of your heart, and to prepare in you Himself a habitation which will be worthy of Him.

POINT I. — JESUS MADE AS THOUGH HE WOULD GO FARTHER.

CONSIDERATIONS. *And they drew nigh to the town whither they were going : and he made as though he would go farther* (1). Nevertheless, His intention was to bestow on these disciples the privilege of becoming their Guest, and to manifest Himself to them by making them witnesses of His Resurrection on the very day of its occurrence. But He wanted this favour to be the reward given to earnest prayer, and to a pressing invitation.

APPLICATIONS. God longs to come to you, to enter into your soul and remain there as your

(1) Luke, xxiv, 28.

Guest, to manifest His presence by signal favours and by the gentle charm of grace : *My delights were to be with the children of men* (1). But He wishes to be sought, prayed for and invited with fervour and perseverance. Therefore, if you think that our Lord is far from you, that your soul is solitary, hardly ever experiencing the sweet movements of grace which denote His Presence, see if your lukewarmness, and a certain reserve towards Him are not the cause.

AFFECTIONS. Shame and repentance for our reserve and past lukewarmness. — Ask forgiveness for them. — Beg and implore Jesus to prepare our heart for His coming.

RESOLUTIONS. To spend this day in great fervour.

POINT II. — THE DISCIPLES CONSTRAIN JESUS
TO REMAIN WITH THEM.

CONSIDERATIONS. When the disciples arrived at their dwelling in Emmaus, they redoubled their entreaties to make the unknown Pilgrim, who had charmed them with such instructive conversation, remain with them. They were not content with asking Him, they urged Him and strove to induce Him by every means in their power. *Stay with us*, they said, *because it is towards evening, and the day is now far spent* (2). They added action : they placed themselves before Him as though to bar his way ; they even went so far as to use some force according to the Evangelists expression : *They constrained Him* (3).

(1) *Prov.*, viii, 31. — (2) *Luke*, xxiv, 29. — (3) *Id.*

APPLICATIONS. Conclude that if you desire to remedy your spiritual insensibility, and to attract Jesus with His sensible graces to your heart, and keep Him there, you must use a holy violence for His sake by increasing, especially at certain seasons, your ardour in practices of devotion and mortification; that you must persevere in this holy violence until you, like the disciples, have constrained Him to yield to your desires. You have all the more reason to urge it when it is towards evening, and your life, without your suspecting it, is *now* perhaps *far spent*, is nearing the end.

AFFECTIONS. Stay with us Lord, *for with Thee is the fountain of life* (1). 'Thou art *« the way and the truth and the life »* (2).

RESOLUTIONS. Often to ask for grace to feel the sensible effects of the presence of Jesus.

POINT III. — JESUS ACCEDES TO THE DISCIPLES INVITATION.

CONSIDERATIONS. The entreaties and gentle violence of the disciples pleased their Lord. He acceded to their wishes and *went in with them* (3). says the Evangelist. How great must have been their joy! How eager they must have been to give Him the best possible hospitality, yet, they were still unaware of the dignity of their Guest. What would they have done had they known?

APPLICATIONS. I have the advantage of knowing my Saviour when I receive Him in Holy

(1) *Ps.* xxxv, 10. — (2) *John*, xiv, 6. — (3) *Luke*, xxiv, 29.

Communion and admit Him into my heart. How much I should do therefore in preparation for His reception! Yet in what does my preparation consist? Is it careful and serious? What do I do to awaken and strengthen the sentiments which Jesus desires to find in my heart: fervent faith, profound humility, ardent charity and filial trust? Does the thought of Communion occupy my mind from the preceding night? Is it my first thought in the morning when I wake? What efforts do I make during meditation to prepare my heart for the approaching coming of Jesus? To what devotions do I have recourse to increase my fervour in receiving Holy Communion and in my thanksgiving (1)?

COLLOQUY. With Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, really present, but hidden from our eyes.

WEDNESDAY.

JESUS

MAKES HIMSELF KNOWN TO HIS DISCIPLES.

I. *Prelude.* See Jesus seated at the table with His two disciples, at the moment when He is recognised by them.

II. *Prelude.* Ask for grace to share in the happiness they experienced at that time.

POINT I. — JESUS MAKES HIMSELF KNOW TO THE DISCIPLES.

CONSIDERATIONS. Whilst Jesus was at table

(1) Several of these devotions are indicated at the end of this volume. (Days of Communion. II Med.) It would be profitable to read them over from time to time, so that they may become a customary practice.

with them, says St. Luke, *he took bread, and blessed and brake, and gave to them* (1). According to all interpreters, this was consecrated bread, His own Body, Holy Communion, that He gave them, in the same manner that He had given it to His Apostles at the last Supper. Hardly had they received, adds the Evangelist, than *their eyes were opened and they knew him* (2). This then is the immediate effect of the Holy Eucharist: it illumines man and gives him a knowledge of God and of Divine things.

APPLICATIONS. How is it that after having so often received the Bread of Angels, I am yet so unenlightened? that I make so little progress in the knowledge of spiritual matters and the ways of God? There is no doubt that it is because I have not had suitable dispositions; that there has been negligence on my part in my preparation, or in my thanksgiving.

AFFECTIONS. Thank God for the graces you have received in Holy Communion in spite of your imperfect dispositions.

RESOLUTIONS. To examine myself on the negligences of my Communions, and amend them.

POINT II. — JESUS VANISHES OUT OF THE DISCIPLES' SIGHT.

CONSIDERATIONS. After Jesus had made Himself known to the disciples in the breaking of bread, *he vanishes out of their sight* (3). They were therefore, deprived, to their great sorrow, of the delight of His sensible Presence, without however losing its salutary effect.

(1) Luke, xxiv, 30. — (2) Id., 31. — (3) Id.

APPLICATIONS. Why did Our Divine Lord so soon vanish out of His disciples' sight before they were able to pay a just tribute of gratitude and adoration? Ascetics answer that it may have been to teach us that after doing a good action, we should rather avoid than seek an opportunity for receiving praise and thanks. Perhaps also to show us that we cannot count on the continued sweetness of the sensible Presence of Jesus, for it is only granted transiently in this vale of tears. Are you not usually too sensitive to the coldness that is shown you by the world, and on the other hand, too indifferent to the deprivation of Divine favours?

AFFECTIONS. Ask forgiveness for having often given way to discouragement, perhaps to complaints when you have received ingratitude for some good you have done, or when God refuses to give you interior consolations in return for your good works. Declare that you know that you are unworthy of these consolations, and that you only desire to obtain them inasmuch as they are necessary to sustain your weakness.

RESOLUTIONS. Let us be generous and fervent in God's service, so that we may not be deprived through our own fault, of the light and unction of grace.

POINT III.

THE RETURN ON THE DISCIPLES TO JERUSALEM.

CONSIDERATIONS. The conversation with Jesus, added to Holy Communion, worked a complete change in the disciples. The darkness which

had enveloped them gave place to the resplendent light of faith, and the sadness that had oppressed them, to gladness of heart strengthened by Divine love and by the certainty that their good Master had indeed risen from the dead. *Was not our heart burning within us, whilst he spoke in the way, and opened to us the Scriptures* (1). In this spirit they rose up *the same hour* says St. Luke, and *went back to Jerusalem* (2), although night was approaching. Why did they go with so much haste? To make known to the other disciples without delay that they had seen Jesus risen from the dead, and thus to make amends for the scandal they had given by refusing against all proof to believe in the Resurrection of their Lord, which had been affirmed by witnesses who had seen Him.

APPLICATIONS. This consideration should make you seek with eagerness the intimate colloquy which Jesus delights to have with the faithful soul in meditation. How do you spend this time? It should also give you an insatiable hunger and thirst for Holy Communion, which worked such wonders on the disciples at Emmaus : do you not receive it with indifference? Again, it should remind you of your duty to make amends promptly and generously for any scandal you may have given.

COLLOQUY. With Jesus. — Thank Him for the benefits received in prayer and Holy Communion. Beg and implore Him to be ever our Light and our Sovereign Consolation.

(1) Luke, xxiv. 32. — (2) *Id.*, 33.

THURSDAY.

JESUS APPEARS

TO THE ASSEMBLED APOSTLES AND DISCIPLES.

I. *Prelude.* Imagine the surprise and joy of the Apostles at the sight of the risen Jesus, full of life and loving-kindness.

II. *Prelude.* Ask for grace to increase your veneration, love and devotion for the Person of Our Lord.

POINT I. — JESUS APPEARS IN THE MIDST OF THE DISCIPLES
THOUGH THE DOORS ARE SHUT.

CONSIDERATIONS. *Now when it was late that same day...* (Easter) *and the doors were shut where the disciples were gathered together for fear of the Jews* (1) *and whilst they were speaking these things, that is of the appearance at Emmaus. Jesus stood in the midst of them, and saith to them : Peace be to you ; it is I, fear not* (2). Consider the time chosen by Our Lord for appearing to His Apostles and disciples. It was when they were all together, closely united by the bonds of charity, retired and recollected, speaking of Him and longing to see Him, but keeping watch against their enemies.

APPLICATIONS. Do you wish Our Lord to have intercourse with you? Be united and at peace with those who live under the same roof as yourself. — Always be recollected, occupying yourself lovingly with the thought of God. — Acquire the habit of using some ejaculatory prayer by which you invite Jesus to come to

(1) John, xx, 19. — (2) Luke, xxiv, 36.

you. — Delight in spending your time in doing things which relate to God. — Cherish a salutary fear and watch over your senses. — Have you acted in this way?

AFFECTIONS. Ask for grace to know and to conquer the obstacles which prevent your closer union with God.

RESOLUTIONS. To try to spend this day in recollection and peace of soul.

POINT II. — THE DISCIPLES IMAGINE THEY SEE A SPIRIT.

CONSIDERATIONS. Our Lord, seeing that the disciples were troubled and took Him for a spirit, said to them : *Why are you troubled and why do thoughts arise in your hearts? See my hands and my feet, that it is I myself; handle and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as you see me to have. And when he had said this, he shewed them his hands and feet...* (1). *The disciples therefore were glad when they saw the Lord* (2). Their uneasiness, their perplexities and fears vanished at the sight of Jesus, giving place to feelings of peace and joy and entire confidence.

APPLICATIONS. Here are the definite signs of the Holy Spirit, and the precious effects of a visit of Our Lord when He manifests Himself to the faithful soul : peace of heart and of all the powers of the soul, from which fear is banished; a certain realisation of the presence of God; a holy joy which fills the heart, detaches it from creatures, and enables it to appreciate the happiness of complete dedication to God.

(1) Luke, XXIV, 38-40. — (2) John, XX, 20.

How happy is the Christian whom Our Lord deigns to visit!

AFFECTIONS. *Come, my God, come; for Thou art my Gladness, and without Thee my table is empty (1).*

RESOLUTIONS. During this day I will try to keep the thought of Jesus showing the wounds of His Hands, Feet and Side.

POINT III — JESUS EATS IN THE PRESENCE
OF HIS DISCIPLES.

CONSIDERATIONS. *But while they yet believed not, says St. Luke, and wondered for joy, he said: Have you here anything to eat? And they offered him a piece of broiled fish and a honey-comb. And when he had eaten before them, taking the remains he gave to them (2).* What goodness and condescension on the part of Our Divine Lord. He disdains nothing; He humbles Himself to the extent of performing an action which seems incompatible with His glorified Body that He may fully convince His beloved disciples of the truth of His Resurrection, a truth on which was to be founded the Gospel which they were called to preach throughout the world.

APPLICATIONS. Learn by Our Lord's example to disdain nothing, but rather to choose things which are humiliating and repugnant to nature in order to comfort the afflicted, to bring back those who have strayed, and to sustain the weak. Endeavour in particular to confirm

(1) *Imitation*: Book III, Chap. xxi. — (2) Luke, xxiv, 41-43.

their faith, when an opportunity occurs, in the future resurrection, and in the joys and inef-
fable blessings which must follow in heaven.
May these thoughts sustain you also, and
encourage you until the end of your life in all
your trials and perplexities.

COLLOQUY. With the holy Apostles who now
share in the glory and happiness of their Divine
Master.—Rejoice with them for having believed
the word of Jesus. — Beg them to offer our
good resolutions and to intercede for us.

FRIDAY.

THE PEACE

THAT JESUS DESIRED FOR HIS APOSTLES.

I. *Prelude.* See Jesus standing in the midst of His
Apostles and disciples.

II. *Prelude.* Ask for the preservation and increase of
peace with God, your neighbour and yourself.

POINT 1. — JESUS DESIRES PEACE FOR HIS APOSTLES.

CONSIDERATIONS. *Peace be to you.* « *Pax
vobis* » (1). These are the first words, the first
desire expressed by our Divine Lord to the
Apostles when He appeared before them on
the day of His Resurrection. *Peace be to you!*
— true peace of heart and soul, man's only
real happiness in this life. And He repeats this
desire three times in two successive appearan-
ces. — Why three times? To make us under-

(1) Luke, xxiv, 36.

stand that this peace which He desires for us should be threefold in its object : peace with God, peace with our neighbour and peace with ourselves.

APPLICATIONS. What value have I set on this inestimable gift of peace, and in the first place, on peace with God? The answer to this question is not hard to find. We know that this peace consists in full and complete conformity of our will with that of God. His will, on the other hand, is manifested and made known to us by His commandments, by the precepts of the Church, and by the direction of those who have been given us as guides through His Providence. Therefore, all that is necessary is that each one of us should ask ourselves : How have I conformed my thoughts, words and actions to this will? With what amount of eagerness, exactness, generosity and love?

AFFECTIONS. Earnestly ask for grace to understand and share in the happiness of those faithful servants of God who, in everything seek to know His Will, and continually conform to it with entire self-abnegation.

RESOLUTIONS. I will carefully avoid whatsoever might be an obstacle to peace with the Lord my God.

POINT II. — JESUS REPEATS THE SAME DESIRE.

CONSIDERATIONS. *He said therefore to them again : Peace be to you (1).* Peace with God must be accompanied by peace with our neighbour, by that sweet and habitual peace which

(1) John, xx, 21.

is the basis of happiness in the family, and of success in good works. It was the fulness of this peace, based on unity and on charity which our Lord desired and brought to His Apostles. It was particularly necessary for them, as the least contention, the least division amongst them would have caused the failure of their apostolate and their mission, for they were to unite all the nations of the earth by the bonds of the same faith, the same hope and the same charity.

APPLICATIONS. Happy are the families in which peace, the fruit of intimate charity, reigns. On the other hand, how unhappy are those who do not enjoy this peace. See by this reflection how necessary it is for you to fulfil faithfully the two great conditions of charity and peace, namely, to bear with the defects of others, and to give others nothing to endure. With what amount of solicitude do you observe these rules? Have peace and unity never been disturbed through your fault? by anger or sharpness, or by exaggerated susceptibility, or by an obstinate attachment to your own judgment, and to your whims?

AFFECTIONS. If you happily belong to a family where peace and unity reign, thank Our Lord for it. If on the contrary, you have to regret miserable divisions, do all in your power to restore harmony and to unite hearts; exercise the apostolate of peace, the noble and holy apostolate which Our Lord came to teach men, and which, by means of the Apostles, was made known and loved throughout the world.

RESOLUTIONS. To do all in my power that

the spirit of peace and unity may reign between all the members of my family.

POINT III. — JESUS DESIRES PEACE
FOR THEM THE THIRD TIME.

CONSIDERATIONS. *Jesus... said* for the third time : *Peace be to you* (1). That Our Divine Saviour's desire may be fully realised in us we also should have peace with ourselves, interior peace. This consists in the testimony of a good conscience, in the submission of the senses of the soul, in the full and entire subordination of the passions to reason, and of reason to faith.

APPLICATIONS. This peace cannot be perfect while we are in this world where conflicts are inevitable; the flesh will always conspire against the spirit, and self-love against the will of God. The peace of our souls during this life should therefore find its principle in a perpetual and vigorous resistance to our unruly inclinations, according to this beautiful saying of the author of the *Imitation* : *True peace of heart therefore is found by resisting our passions* (2). Do you act in accordance with these rules?

COLLOQUY. With Jesus the Author of all blessings and especially that of peace. Thank Him for having attracted and drawn us by the unction of grace to practise the precepts of His holy law. So long as we are faithful to this, we shall enjoy that three fold peace which the world promises, but cannot give.

(1) John, xx, 26. — (2) Book I, Chap. vi.

SATURDAY.

JESUS TRANSMITS TO THE APOSTLES

HIS MISSION, THE HOLY GHOST,
AND THE POWER TO FORGIVE SINS.

I. *Prelude.* See Our Lord full of loving-kindness in the midst of His beloved Apostles.

II. *Prelude.* Ask for grace to appreciate the gifts bestowed on them.

POINT I. — JESUS TRANSMITS TO THE APOSTLES THE MISSION
HE HAD RECEIVED FROM HIS FATHER.

CONSIDERATIONS. After again bestowing His peace on the Apostles, Jesus says to them : *As the Father hath sent me, I also send you* (1), to attain the same ends — to glorify my Father and to save men ; by the same means — by prayer and preaching amidst persecution and obstacles of every kind ; and with the assurance of the same reward : *And I dispose to you as my Father hath disposed to me, a kingdom, that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom ; and may sit upon thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel* (2). What a sublime mission — to be ambassadors of Jesus Christ with men — to co-operate with Him in the work of redeeming the world, in the eternal salvation of souls !

APPLICATIONS. Do not think that this noble mission is confided exclusively to ministers of religion. All the faithful are called to it. All, according to the extent of their influence upon

(1) John, xv, 21. — (2) Luke, xxii, 29-30

others, can and also should take their part, with the certainty that they too will share in the promised reward. *He gave to every one of them commandment concerning his neighbour*, says *Ecclesiasticus* (1) — that his spiritual interests might be taken to heart. One of the glories of our age, and one of the great consolations of the Church is that never at any other period has this great commandment been fulfilled with so much fidelity and success by the faithful of both sexes; never have associations and corporal and spiritual works been so numerous and so varied. What part do you take in them?

AFFECTIONS. Acts of admiration, joy and gratitude for being able to co operate with Our Divine Saviour and His holy Church for the glory of God, by giving relief to the unfortunate, and by assisting in the salvation of souls.

RESOLUTIONS. The difficulties and trials to which those who take part in good works are exposed, will not keep me from joining them.

POINT II. — JESUS BESTOWS THE HOLY GHOST
ON THE APOSTLES.

CONSIDERATIONS. The mission entrusted to the Apostles was infinitely beyond their strength. For this reason, desiring to proportion the means to the end, *He breathed on them*, says the Evangelist, and *He said to them : Receive ye the Holy Ghost* (2). By this mysterious action Jesus communicated to His Apostles the Holy Spirit which is in Him and proceeds from Him as He proceeds from the Father, so that,

(1) *Ecclesi.*, xvii, 12. — (2) *John*, xx, 22.

dead from henceforward to the world, they might live by His Spirit alone, — a spirit wholly opposed to the spirit of the world where all is selfishness, pride, sensuality and cupidity; for the Spirit of Jesus Christ is a Spirit of self-sacrifice, humility, mortification, poverty and charity.

APPLICATIONS. Examine yourself carefully, and endeavour to see clearly which spirit animates you, and is predominant; whether it is the Spirit of Jesus Christ or of the world, and to what extent the one or the other exercises its dominion over you.

AFFECTIONS. Arouse in yourself an ardent desire to be of the number of those true children of God spoken of by the Apostle St. Paul when he says : *For whosoever are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God* (1), and if there be anything in you which is opposed to this spirit, earnestly ask for courage and strength to destroy it.

RESOLUTIONS. I will be increasingly careful in my efforts to live in the Spirit of Jesus Christ.

POINT III. — JESUS GIVES HIS DISCIPLES THE POWER
TO REMIT SINS.

CONSIDERATIONS. Immediately after Jesus had bestowed the Holy Ghost on the Apostles He said to them : *Whose sins you shall forgive they are forgiven them; and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained* (2). With these memorable words Our Lord instituted the Sa-

(1) *Rom.*, viii, 14. — (2) *John*, xx, 23.

crament of Penance, granting to the Apostles and in their person to every validly ordained priest, the wonderful power of forgiving sins committed after baptism, however great or numerous they might be. What goodness and generosity on the part of Our Lord !

APPLICATIONS. That we may understand the gift made us by the institution of the Sacrament of reconciliation, let us ask ourselves what hope of salvation there would have been for us weak men who allow ourselves to be so easily tempted and carried away had we not had this second plank after shipwreck as it is called by Council of Trent ? Has your gratitude been proportionate to the magnitude of the blessing ? How many times have you thanked your Saviour ? Have you regarded this Sacrament as an irksome burden ? Perhaps you have abused it, even to the point of sacrilege ? or at least, have you through imperfect preparation or unsuitable dispositions, gained little benefit from it ?

COLLOQUY. With our Divine Lord. — Thank Him for the inestimable blessing He has granted us by instituting the Sacrament of Penance.

Third week after Easter.

SUNDAY.

FEAST OF THE PATRONAGE
OF ST. JOSEPH.

I. *Prelude.* Hear Jesus saying — as Pharaoh did once to his people : *Go to Joseph.*

II. *Prelude.* Ask for great confidence in St. Joseph

POINT I. — ST. JOSEPH IS OUR PATRON AND PROTECTOR.

CONSIDERATIONS. St. Joseph's election by God to be the foster father of His Incarnate Word, and the eminent sanctity implied in this choice, have produced a boundless confidence in the intercession of this holy Patriarch in the hearts of the faithful. They rightly believe that Jesus in His heavenly glory will always accede to the requests of the one whom He Himself obeyed during His mortal life. This is the reason of the unusual honour paid to St. Joseph by the whole world; the reason for all the confraternities formed under his name, and also for the desire manifested by many towns, provinces and even countries, to have him as their special patron. Belgium rejoices in having obtained this favour, granted it by Pope Innocent IX. (Bull *Eximia pietas*, 19, April, 1679.) The Pope fixed the solemn feast of the *Patronage of St. Joseph* on the third Sunday after Easter.

APPLICATIONS. Since it pleased Our Lord to give us St. Joseph as our patron and protector, by means of the Church's declaration, should we not believe that through the intercession of this great Saint, He desires to grant us favours? Arouse your confidence in this powerful patron. *Go to Joseph*, go and present your desires and supplications before him, not for yourself only, but also for all the inhabitants of your country, and for those in particular who are in authority and have the direction of affairs in their hands.

AFFECTIONS. Thank your glorious patron for the numerous blessings he has obtained for

you. — Beg and implore him to continue his protection over you and all your countrymen.

RESOLUTIONS. With this intention I shall unite to-day with the bishops, priests and all the faithful, especially during Divine Service.

POINT II. — ST. JOSEPH IS THE PATRON AND PROTECTOR
OF CHRISTIAN FAMILIES.

CONSIDERATIONS. St. Joseph, as the lawful Spouse of the Blessed Virgin, was, according to the order established by God, the head of the Holy Family. It was he who supported them by the labour of his hands, he who governed and directed them in accordance with the designs of heaven manifested by the ministry of Angels, and the Gospel shows us that Jesus and Mary always obeyed him strictly. Therefore, he is rightly regarded and invoked as the special protector of Christian families who desire to live according to the eternal laws and designs of God.

APPLICATIONS. On the occasion of the Patronage of St. Joseph, let us recall a truth too often ignored or forgotten, which is that there are few people who are not indebted to their patron Saint for preservation from great evils, or favoured by some extraordinary grace, without their knowledge. What is true in regard to individuals, is also true in regard to families. Therefore, it is their duty on this day to render solemn thanksgivings to St. Joseph, to pay the debt of gratitude which through ignorance they have neglected. How many families fulfil this duty? Do what you can so that your thanksgiving at least will not be wanting.

AFFECTIONS. Recommend all the members of your family to St. Joseph, — regard yourself as specially deputed by them to pay solemn homage of praise, blessing and thanksgiving.

RESOLUTIONS. I will try to practise the virtues of which St. Joseph has given an example, so that I may thus please him, and that he may intercede more fervently for the family of which I am a member.

POINT III. — ST. JOSEPH IS THE SPECIAL PATRON
AND PROTECTOR OF CHRISTIAN YOUTH.

CONSIDERATIONS. The Gospel says that the Child Jesus submitted to the direction of St. Joseph, and that He was obedient to him in all things, no less than to Mary. *He was subject to them* (1). We may say that to him above all, was confided the upbringing of Jesus as a child, as a boy, and as a young man. He enjoyed the greatest happiness a father can have, — seeing Him advance *in wisdom and age and grace with God and men* (2). May we not presume that St. Joseph takes a particular interest in, and extends in a special manner his protection over children as well as over those who are entrusted with training them in good habits and in their spiritual life.

APPLICATIONS. If you are entrusted, in any capacity whatever, with the bringing up of children or young people in the fear and love of Our Lord, a sublime but difficult mission is yours, and one full of responsibility. The work

(1) Luke, II, 51. — (2) *Ib.*, 52.

of education demands exceptional qualities and graces. You ardently desire to obtain them. Have recourse then to the special patron and protector of Christian childhood and youth, and go to St. Joseph, above all on this day, and your desires will be granted. If you are not in any way connected with the work of education, pray for those who have charge of it; you will share in their merits, and you will obtain the favour of St. Joseph more and more.

COLLOQUY. With St. Joseph.

MONDAY.

ON THE

GOSPEL OF THE PRECEDING SUNDAY.

I. *Prelude.* Hear Jesus saying these words : *Amen, Amen, I say to you, that you shall lament and weep, but the world shall rejoice (1).*

II. *Prelude.* Ask for a supreme disdain of all that does not lead to God.

POINT I. — THE JOY OF THE CHILDREN OF THIS WORLD.

CONSIDERATIONS. When Our Lord was about to leave the world He said to His disciples : *A little while, and now you shall not see me... because I go to the Father (2) You shall lament and weep, but the world shall rejoice (3).* Here we see how Jesus has divided the blessings of the present life; to the good He bequeaths crosses

(1) John, xvi, 20. — (2) Id., 16. — (3) Id., 20.

and tears; to the worldly, whom the Scriptures call the children of this world, He grants material benefits and enjoyments. By uniting in this way His supreme justice with His goodness He desires to purify the former from the smallest stains of sin by momentary sufferings, and reward the latter momentarily for their good actions, which since they are only natural, are without merit for eternity. He therefore, allows them the joys of the world. What a sad fate is theirs! They are apparently happy, but not so in reality for they are always tormented by a thirst to acquire, and with a fear to lose, oppressed by the tyranny of violent, unworthy and insatiable desires, stung by remorse of conscience, and terrified at the thought of death and eternity.

APPLICATIONS. Do you regard the apparent happiness of the worldly in this light? Do you not sometimes envy it, and say to yourself: Why have I embraced a kind of life which entails so many sacrifices? Can I not be saved even if I do allow myself more liberty? If this be the case, it is to be feared that your faith has weakened, that lukewarmness has spread its darkness over your mind, and allowed unruly affections to spring up in your heart. The Christian who reaches this point runs a great risk of falling into perverse delusions and of being lost. What should you think of it?

AFFECTIONS. Scorn and disdain for the false joys of the world. Gratitude for having realised their vanity and evil.

RESOLUTIONS. To say to myself often, above all when tempted to abandon my good resolu-

tions : O my soul, thou art happy in not being blinded and fascinated as so many are by the temptations of the world !

POINT II. — THE SORROW OF THE CHILDREN OF GOD.

CONSIDERATIONS. *You shall lament, but the world shall rejoice* (1). The privations, persecutions, and sufferings of every kind bequeathed by Jesus Christ to His Apostles and to all His true disciples as their heritage in this world make worldly men look upon them as unfortunate beings, victims of terrible misfortune. They pity their fate, for they do not know the manna hidden under the Cross, and have never tasted the consolations and ineffable joys which God grants to those who suffer for love of Him. The Apostle experienced them when he exclaimed : *I exceedingly abound with joy in all our tribulation* (2). St. Augustine also tasted them when he said to those who expressed sorrow for the rigour of his penance : « The tears you see me shed are sweeter than all the pleasures I enjoyed in the world ».

APPLICATIONS. The words tears and sadness have not therefore the same meaning from the lips of Jesus as that commonly applied to them ; on the contrary, they contain a condemnation of the foolish merriment and the sinful pleasures of the world. « *For the sorrow that is according to God worketh penance steadfast unto salvation : but the sorrow of the world worketh death* » (3). The first only affects the

(1) John, xvi, 20. — (2) II Corin, vii, 4. — (3) *Ibid.*, 10.

senses; it is only apparent sadness and leaves joy untouched in the soul, an indescribable joy, the foretaste of the joys of heaven, of which the worldly can form no conception. This is affirmed by the same Saint : *As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing* (1).

AFFECTIONS. Give thanks to God Who by inspiring you with a desire for holiness, has led you to the source of true and pure joy.

RESOLUTIONS. I will regard and receive sufferings of all kinds in a spirit of faith.

POINT III. — THE ETERNITY RESERVED FOR BOTH.

CONSIDERATIONS. *Your sorrow shall be turned into joy. I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man shall take from you* (2). These are the final words of the Gospel for this day. They assure us that privations, tears, and the momentary sorrows of the children of God will be followed by eternal happiness and the joys of heaven, according to the words spoken on another occasion : *Blessed are they that mourn : for they shall be comforted* (3). The reverse will be the fate of the children of this world. Their transient joy shall be changed into mourning and into eternal suffering. *Woe to you that now laugh, says Jesus, for you shall mourn and weep* (4). What a contrast! A moment of joy and an eternity of suffering! A moment of suffering and an eternity of joy!

COLLOQUY. With our Divine Saviour.

(1) II *Corin.*, vi, 10. — (2) John, xvi, 20-22. — (3) Matt., v, 4. — (4) Luke, vi, 25.

TUESDAY.

THE INCREDULITY OF THE APOSTLE
ST. THOMAS.

- I. *Prelude.* See Thomas rashly leaving his companions.
 II. *Prelude.* Ask for the grace of prudent self-distrust.

POINT I. — THE ISOLATION OF THE APOSTLE ST. THOMAS.

CONSIDERATIONS. The appearance of Jesus to His disciples on the day of His Resurrection had filled them with joy, consolation and courage. One alone amongst them, Thomas, did not share this happiness because he had separated himself from his brethren, and left the place where they assembled together for prayer. *Now Thomas was not with them when Jesus came,* says St. John (1).

APPLICATIONS. A fault which is not uncommon amongst those who profess piety, is to affect unconventionality; to dispense through no reasonable motive with practices which are in general use; or to take no part in meetings or in practices of devotion which are attended by the generality of the faithful on certain days. Habits such as these, which can be called eccentricities, have often had no other motive than self-love, pride or the desire to attract attention. What is certain is, that according to the author of the *Imitation : Devout discourses on spiritual things do greatly further our spiritual growth, especially when persons of one mind and spirit be gathered together in God* (2).

AFFECTIONS. O my God I believe this, and

(1), John, xx, 24. — (2) Book I, Chap. x.

the misfortune of St. Thomas makes it clearer than ever to me. — Deign to preserve me from the spirit of singularity and obstinacy.

RESOLUTIONS. To avoid singularity as much as possible in all things, but especially in practices of piety.

POINT II. — THE OBSTINATE INCREDULITY OF THOMAS.

CONSIDERATIONS. To the fault that Thomas committed by separating himself from his companions, he added another, more serious than the first : a most obstinate incredulity. In fact, although the Apostles, the disciples, the holy women and probably also the Blessed Virgin, had assured him unanimously that their Divine Master had risen, that they had seen Him, heard Him, touched Him with their hands, he rejected their testimony, and persisted in disbelieving them.

APPLICATIONS. Thus it is that a fault is seldom single : usually it is followed by a second fault worse than the first, another second by a third, more serious than the two preceding. Does not your conscience tell you that this is unfortunately too true ? Be careful not to renew this unhappy experience.

AFFECTIONS. Ask God that He may deign, by remorse of conscience and salutary uneasiness to prevent you when you are on the point of committing a fault or an infidelity for the first time.

RESOLUTIONS. To avoid being self-opinionated, or merely too much wrapped up in our own thoughts, a very common proof of conceit, narrowmindedness or ignorance.

POINT III. — THE PRIDE AND TEMERITY OF THOMAS.

CONSIDERATIONS. Avarice had led Judas to the abyss; pride almost succeeded in causing the ruin of Thomas, also. It led him to imagine himself more enlightened than all his companions, even to thinking them foolish, and he persevered obstinately, alone against them all in disbelieving. To this intolerable pride he added the most culpable presumption : *Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, he said, and put my finger into the place of the nails, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe* (1). This was a desire to coerce his Master, to dictate the conditions of an act of faith in the truth of His Resurrection; and he exposed himself to the Saviour's just anger.

APPLICATIONS. With good reason you are shocked at the conduct of St. Thomas. But be careful, for you are not less liable to fall than he; and if this Apostle who spent three years in the school of Our Divine Lord went this length through over self-confidence, you should be very careful in all your undertakings, and in all your words. How often your solicitude has failed! Therefore, thank our Lord for having preserved you from the evil consequences which might have resulted from your want of thought and your pride. Renew your resolutions to be modest and prudent in declaring your opinion, above all when it differs from the ordinary.

COLLOQUY. With our Divine Saviour. — Ask Him for self-distrust and for an extreme horror

(1) John, xx, 25.

of the spirit of contradiction and obstinacy. Offer Him your resolution to watch over your words, especially in long conversations, and to refrain from contradicting others so long as assertions regarding the interests of the faith, of charity, or religious principles are not involved.

WEDNESDAY.

JESUS APPEARS TO ST. THOMAS,

IN THE PRESENCE

OF ALL THE APOSTLES AND MANY DISCIPLES.

- I. *Prelude.* Imagine that reverent and solemn meeting.
 II. *Prelude.* Ask for grace to realise your faults and to make prompt amends for them.

POINT I. — JESUS ASSISTS ST. THOMAS TO RENOUNCE HIS ERROR.

CONSIDERATIONS. On the first Sunday after Easter, Jesus appeared again to the disciples assembled in the Cenacle as He had done eight days before. But this time Thomas was with them. *After eight days again*, says St. John, *his disciples were within, and Thomas was with them. Jesus cometh, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst* (1). It is this circumstance of the presence of St. Thomas, expressly mentioned by the Evangelist that our Lord had in view primarily, and why? In order to give this incredulous Apostle an opportunity of conversion, and thus to bring back the strayed sheep to the right path. What loving-kindness on the part of Jesus! — He takes the first step

(1) John, xx, 26.

towards the sinner. Left to himself what would have become of the unhappy Thomas? After persisting eight days in his incredulity, is it not probable that he would ever have remained the same, and that he would have been lost for all eternity?

APPLICATIONS. Has it not happened that you also, perhaps more than once, have passed a considerable time consciously in the habit of some sin? To whom are you indebted for your release, so that death has not taken you unawares like so many others, while in that unhappy state? Faith tells you that the infinite Goodness of God prevented you by His grace. It is through *the mercies of the Lord*, said Jeremias, *that we are not consumed* (1). Should you not say the same with profound joy and gratitude.

AFFECTIONS. Praise and bless the Lord for His unspeakable goodness and for His exceptional love towards you.

RESOLUTIONS. To strive to rise promptly out of the unhappy state of sin should you fall in spite of your good resolutions.

POINT II. — JESUS HELPS ST. THOMAS TO REPAIR
THE SCANDAL GIVEN BY HIS CONDUCT.

CONSIDERATIONS. Another very remarkable circumstance connected with this appearance is that Jesus desired to appear to St. Thomas in the presence of the other Apostles. Why did He desire to do this? In order that it might be easier for Thomas to make amends before the others by his humble repentance, for the scandal

(1) *Lam.*, iii, 22.

and the pain he had given them. *The works of God are perfect*, says Moses (1), especially the works of His mercy. We have the proof here. Jesus not only grants to His unfaithful disciple the grace to realise his sin, but helps him by the concurrence of providential circumstances to make his conversion complete, perfect and exemplary.

APPLICATIONS. If you should happen to scandalise or grieve, by words or actions, those with whom you live, or who are related to you, take advantage of the first opportunity offered by Providence to make amends for the harm done; and if the satisfaction must be made in public, perform it willingly, with humility and sincerity. You will lose nothing in anyone's opinion. To say that we were mistaken yesterday proves that we are wiser to-day, says the proverb.

AFFECTIONS. Ask God's pardon for the bad example you have unhappily given during your life, perhaps to those you should have edified.

RESOLUTIONS. To watch more strictly, especially over our words, that we may not give any one either a bad example or cause for sorrow.

POINT III. — JESUS ASSISTS THOMAS TO REPENT WITHOUT COMPROMISING HIS REPUTATION.

CONSIDERATIONS. *Jesus cometh, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst* (2). In this circumstance mentioned by the Evangelist, *the doors being shut*, there is not only a mystery, but also a valuable lesson for us. Jesus warns

(1) *Deut.*, xxxii, 4. — (2) *John*, xx, 26.

us that we should never expose the faults of others to those who have no right to know them; nor to reprove anyone publicly except in the presence of those who have witnessed the fault. For this reason Jesus appeared to Thomas and reproved him only before those whom he had scandalised and grieved by his incredulity.

APPLICATIONS. Have you always followed these rules of justice and charity? Have you not as a mark of confidence, exposed the faults of others, not to the one whose duty it was to correct them, but to those who did not require to know? Ask yourself whether you may not have to reproach yourself gravely on this point. Observe the extreme delicacy of the Saints in this respect. It is said in the *Life of St. Ignatius Loyola*, that he reproached himself bitterly for having one day consulted two fathers in the house on the measures to be taken in regard to someone who had done wrong, because strictly speaking, it would have been sufficient had he exposed the fault to one of the two and had asked advice from him alone.

COLLOQUY. With our Divine Saviour, in accordance with the *affections* and *resolutions* of the first two Points.

THURSDAY.

CONVERSION AND PROFESSION OF FAITH OF ST. THOMAS.

I. *Prelude.* See St. Thomas ashamed and repentant at the feet of his Divine Master.

II. *Prelude.* Ask for grace to experience the same feelings especially when receiving holy absolution.

POINT I. — JESUS INVITES ST. THOMAS
TO TOUCH HIS WOUNDS.

CONSIDERATIONS. How great must have been the surprise and fear felt by St. Thomas when he saw his Divine Master whom he had insulted. He had denied His veracity by refusing to believe in the miracle of the Resurrection, so clearly foretold by the Saviour; in a sense he had laid down a law to Him; he had dictated his conditions, and imposed his own will and whims when he said : *Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the place of the nails, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe* (1). So much pride and temerity might well have made him fear the effects of righteous indignation. Nevertheless, what did Jesus do? With wonderful kindness, He complied with the demand that Thomas made, and only administered a gentle reproach : *Put in thy finger hither, He says to him, and see my hands, and bring hither thy hand, and put it into my side; and be not faithless but believing* (2).

APPLICATIONS. It is in this way that the Good Shepherd, to gain our souls, carries His condescension to the point of yielding, so to speak, to our inclinations, our frailty, and our whims. What kindness, what gentleness! Have you not experienced it? Reflect carefully on your past life, especially on all the circumstances of your conversion, or on your resolution to give yourself to God wholly, without reserve, and you will probably find there also testimony of

(1) John, xx, 25. — (2) Id., 27.

His unutterable goodness, which condescended and conformed to your character, to your temperament, your desires and inclinations.

AFFECTIONS. Reverence — Love — Gratitude.

RESOLUTIONS. To place ourselves entirely, with perfect trust in the hands of this Good Shepherd of our souls.

POINT II. — JESUS ACCEPTS REPENTANCE AND PROFESSION OF FAITH FROM ST. THOMAS.

CONSIDERATIONS. The splendour and beauty of the Divinity diffused over the glorified Body of Jesus, the gentle words which came from His lips, and above all His infinite loving-kindness, converted and won the heart of the Apostle in an instant. Carried away, he could only utter these words : *My Lord, and my God* (1). The words were few, but they expressed much, since they embraced the strongest profession of faith in the Humanity and Divinity of Jesus, and expressed with wonderful power the veneration, repentance, submission, hope, love and devotion which were in the depths of St. Thomas' heart. Jesus was pleased with these, and through them the repentant Apostle gained his pardon, and the past was forgotten.

APPLICATIONS. This teaches us that the efficacy of our prayers does not consist in many and carefully chosen words, but in the disposition of heart from which they spring. It also teaches us how ready our Lord is to hear and pardon us, and to grant us His grace, even after we have grievously offended Him. The

(1) John, xx, 28.

reason that we are as yet so imperfectly purified from the stains of our sins, and so poor in graces and merits, must be attributed to our want of faith and trust.

AFFECTIONS. Repeat and appreciate these words of St. Thomas : *My Lord, and my God! My Lord and my God.*

RESOLUTIONS. After my falls and in all my necessities, I will have recourse to the Divine Shepherd of my soul and absolute confidence (1).

POINT III. — JESUS DECLARES THE MERIT OF FAITH.

CONSIDERATIONS. Observe how Our Divine Lord answers the profession of faith made by the converted Apostle : *Because thou hast seen me Thomas, thou hast believed : blessed are they that have not seen and have believed* (2). What do these words mean? Obviously that the greater or lesser merit of faith and its corresponding reward in heaven depend, not on the evidence we may have had by the testimony of miracles, but on the blind submission of our understanding to the revealed word of God.

APPLICATIONS. This vivid faith, so much praised by our Lord, is the fruit of spécial grace, and a gift of God. We should therefore ask for it from the Author of all grace, and ask that it may increase continually, as the Apostles did when they said to the Lord : *Increase our faith* (3). Why is your faith so feeble, so unfruitful in works of zeal and holi-

(1) In the notes, pages 21, 37, 54, it is profitable to recall what is written, etc. — (2) John, xx, 29. — (3) Luke, xvii, 5.

ness? Is it not because you do not ask with sufficient earnestness to have it increased and strengthened?

COLLOQUY. With Jesus. Praise, bless and glorify the goodness and gentleness of our loving Saviour. Ask Him, with the Apostles, for the grace of that vivid faith which moves mountains.

FRIDAY.

THE APPEARANCE OF JESUS

ON THE BORDERS OF THE SEA OF TIBERIAS.

I. *Prelude.* See the boat from which St. Peter and his six companions cast their nets without catching anything throughout the night.

II. *Prelude.* Ask for the assistance of grace never to labour without obtaining some fruit for eternity.

POINT I. — ST. PETER AND SIX OTHER DISCIPLES
SPEND THE NIGHT AT THEIR NETS.

CONSIDERATIONS. The circumstances of this memorable appearance are thus recorded by St. John : *There were together Simon Peter, and Thomas who is called Didymus, and Nathanael, who was of Cana of Galilee, and the sons of Zebedee, and two others of his disciples. Simon Peter saith to them : I go a fishing. They say to him : We also come with thee. And they went forth and entered into the ship* (1). Observe the marvelous unanimity in feeling and will amongst the Saviour's disciples. St. Peter declared his intention of going

(1) John, xxi, 2-3.

to fish, and immediately the others agreed to join him.

APPLICATIONS. In family life there is nothing more beautiful and at the same time so helpful in maintaining charity and love, than to know how to renounce your own ideas and inclinations to conform with the views and actions of others when they do not conflict with the laws of God and of the Church. Have I done this? Is there not in me a propensity for contradiction? — too obstinate an attachment to my own judgment? — and has this not given rise to quarrels, to unprofitable and often dangerous disputes?

AFFECTIONS. Arouse in your heart an ardent desire to be able to say henceforward with as much truth as the Apostle : *I became all things to all men, that I might save all* (1), practising self-denial at all times, in order to seek alone the interests of Jesus and those amongst whom I live.

RESOLUTIONS. To try to obtain this result by commencing this very day to pay special heed to it.

POINT II. — THEY WORKED ALL THE NIGHT WITHOUT TAKING ANYTHING.

CONSIDERATIONS. *And that night they caught nothing* (2). This protracted and fruitless labour was permitted by Providence. It was God's will that in the absence of the Saviour they should catch nothing throughout the entire night, and that in His presence they should draw a multitude of fishes when they cast in

(1) *I Corin.*, ix, 22. — (2) *John*, xxi, 3.

the net at His bidding : and for what reason? In order to teach us that so long as Our Lord is not present in our soul by sanctifying grace, we shall always labour fruitlessly for eternal life; and that the efforts of our zeal will be of little avail if we are not closely united to Him by purity of intention and the spirit of prayer.

APPLICATIONS. There are no men more to be pitied than those who labour much and gain nothing or very little for eternity. Who are these unfortunate people? In the first place those who knowingly live in the state of mortal sin, deprived of sanctifying grace. How numerous these are amongst the many who bear the name of Christian! Then those who, though in a state of grace, lose all or part of the merit of their good works because they have an unworthy intention in doing them or because they have no good intention at all.

AFFECTIONS. Give thanks to our Lord for having assisted you by a special Providence, to remain in His holy grace, thus making the work of every moment fruitful, and effective in amassing an inestimable treasure of merits in heaven. — Beg and implore Him never to abandon you to your weakness and natural inconstancy.

RESOLUTIONS. I will renew my good intentions frequently by ejaculatory prayers.

POINT III — THEY SEE JESUS ON THE SHORE WITHOUT
RECOGNISING HIM.

CONSIDERATIONS. *When the morning was come, Jesus stood on the shore : yet the disciples knew not that it was Jesus. Jesus therefore said to them : Children, have you any*

meat? They answered him : No (1). Our Divine Lord knew that they had caught nothing, that they were hungry, and overcome with fatigue. He had resolved however, to supply their wants by a miracle, but He chose to question them, to receive from their lips the acknowledgment of their distress, and to awaken in their hearts a more ardent desire for assistance.

APPLICATIONS. It is by apprehending the distress of our souls by humbly confessing it, and by having an ardent desire for assistance that God prepares us for receiving His gifts. Is it not because you have been wanting in these dispositions that you have had such a small share in the gifts of our Lord? Examine yourself, and remember that the more discouraged you are over your weaknesses, the more reason you have to pray with confidence, and the more assurance you have of help.

COLLOQUY. With your guardian angel who has helped so greatly by holy inspirations in preserving you from serious falls, or in raising you up again promptly; who has constantly reminded you of God, and of your duty to live and act with the desire of pleasing Him alone.

SATURDAY.

THE MIRACULOUS DRAUGHT OF FISHES.

JESUS RECOGNISED BY ST. JOHN.

I. *Prelude.* See the Apostles in the boat, and Jesus near them on the shore.

II. *Prelude.* Ask for the spirit of obedience and fervour.

(1) John, xxi, 4-5.

POINT I. — THE REWARD OF THE DISCIPLES' BLIND OBEDIENCE.

CONSIDERATIONS. Jesus prepared the disciples to receive an exceptional favour by enabling them to realise and humbly confess their helplessness. Therefore He said to them in that tone of authority which was habitual to Him : *Cast the net on the right side of the ship; and you shall find. They cast therefore : and now they were not able to draw it for the multitude of fishes* (1). This unlooked-for success, contrary to all expectations, was the reward of the Apostles prompt and blind obedience to the voice of One who seemed to them to speak in the name of God. *But their eyes were held that they should not know Him*, says St. Luke (2).

APPLICATIONS. If we wish our undertakings to be crowned with full and complete success, we must be children of obedience, submissive in faith and in love to those who speak to us or command us in the name and with the authority of God. Let us imitate the Apostles, and like them refrain from suggesting apparent impossibilities. Let us obey promptly in the spirit of faith, supported by the words of Him Who holds omnipotence in His hands, Who says to us : *All things are possible to him that believeth* (3). *An obedient man shall speak of victory* (4). Do I thus obey those who have been given some authority over me? On the contrary, do I not, at least very often, obey unwillingly or from purely human motives?

(1) John, xxi, 6. — (2) Luke, xxiv, 16. — (3) Mark, ix, 23.
— (4) *Prov.*, xxi, 28

AFFECTIONS. Earnestly ask for grace to excel in the virtue of obedience.

RESOLUTIONS. To acquire the habit of obeying in the spirit of faith, and with joy, promptitude and perseverance by means of supernatural motives.

POINT II. — THE REWARD OF ST. JOHN'S PURITY.

CONSIDERATIONS. We should imagine that the miraculous draught would immediately have revealed to the disciples. Him to Whom they owed it. Yet St. John the beloved disciple was the only one who pierced the mysterious veil with which Jesus surrounded Himself, and he said to St. Peter : *It is the Lord* (1). Why had St. John the supernatural light in preference to the other disciples? St. Jerome answers that it was the prerogative of his purity : The virgin disciple alone recognised the King of virgins? The purity of his heart had given him a favoured place in the Heart of Jesus. Moreover, we see here the literal fulfilment of our Saviour's words : *Blessed are the clean of heart for they shall see God* (2).

APPLICATIONS. You often complain that you are in a constant state of spiritual dryness or darkness; that you have so little of that practical light, which by enlightening the soul, fills it with sweet unction, and strengthens it wonderfully in the love of God and virtue. Where must you search for the cause? Is it not perhaps due to your negligence in persevering and increasing the purity of your heart? Are you not amongst those who, for want of recollection

(1) John, xxi, 7. — (2) Matt., v, 8.

and mortification, fall daily into many faults? Even if these faults are slight they leave stains in your soul, thereby destroying its purity.

AFFECTIONS. *Wash me yet more from my iniquity, create a clean heart in me, O Lord* (1).

RESOLUTIONS. To strive by every means to attain the utmost purity of conscience.

POINT III. — THE VEHEMENCE OF ST. PETER'S FERVOUR.

CONSIDERATIONS. *Simon Peter when he heard that it was the Lord... cast himself into the sea... (for they were not far from the land)* (2). Carefully consider this vehemence of love shown by the Apostle for his Divine Master. The movement of the overlaiden ship seems too slow for him; he is impatient to be with Him Whom he loves; love outstrips reason; it does not allow him to take into consideration the dangers to which he is exposing himself by throwing himself into the sea. His only thought is to go to Jesus, to join Him as soon as possible, and any means seem reasonable and simple.

APPLICATIONS. In this conduct of the Apostle, we find all the characteristics of fervour, the wonderful qualities and effects of Divine love, so well described by the author of the *Imitation*: *Love oftentimes knoweth no measure, but is fervent beyond all measure; love attempteth what is above its strength, for it thinketh all things possible. Where he who doth not love fainteth and tieth down, love is strong for all things* (3). Do you sometimes experience the effects of this love?

(1) Ps. l. 4, 12. — (2) John, xxi. 7-8. — (3) Book III, Chap. v.

COLLOQUY. With Jesus ; ask Him for a pure, humble and submissive heart, wholly inflamed with love of Him.

Fourth week after Easter.

SUNDAY.

ON THE GOSPEL FOR THE DAY.

I. *Prelude.* Hear Jesus speaking to the disciples on the approaching mission of the Holy Ghost.

II. *Prelude.* Ask for the spirit of magnanimity and love.

POINT I. — JESUS CHRIST'S MAGNANIMITY IN SENDING THE HOLY GHOST.

CONSIDERATIONS. At that time Jesus said to His Apostles : *And now I go to him that sent me, and none of you asketh me : whither goest thou? But because I have spoken these things to you, sorrow hath filled your heart. But I tell you the truth : it is expedient to you that I go* (1). Such is the disinterestedness of Christ's love for us. It was not the repose, happiness and glory promised to His sacred Humanity that He had in view through His Ascension, but our interests and our gain. Until the last moment of His visible Presence upon earth He forgot Himself and thought of us alone. He acted in this way throughout His life, from the stable where He shed tears of compassion rather than of pain, to the foot of Calvary when He said to the women who pitied Him : *Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not over me, but weep for yourselves and for your children* (2).

(1) John, xvi, 5-7. — (2) Luke, xxiii, 28.

APPLICATIONS. Compare this disinterested love manifested by God towards you with your love for God, and by this simple contrast you will perhaps be convinced that your love hardly merits that exalted name, spoilt, as it is, by the mingling of self-love and self-interest. In reality, in the generous efforts you sometimes make to overcome a sin, or to practise this or that virtue, is it not primarily, if not wholly, the fear of punishment, or the hope of reward which influences your action?

AFFECTIONS. Humble acknowledgement, shame, and a desire to rise to a higher degree of love, more worthy of God and more worthy of yourself, the child of God.

RESOLUTIONS. To strive to love God for Himself.

POINT II. — THE PROMISE OF THE HOLY GHOST.

CONSIDERATIONS. *For if I go not, the Paraclete will not come to you, but if I go, I will send him to you* (1). Why could not the Apostles receive the Holy Ghost before the Ascension of Jesus Christ? One of the reasons alleged by interpreters of the Holy Scriptures, and affirmed particularly by St. Augustine, is that the affection which the Apostles felt for the corporal Presence of their Divine Master was too human and almost entirely sensible. Their love was too natural, too imperfect. It was necessary for them to be deprived of the sensible object of their love, the Humanity of the Word; failing this, they could not receive the fulness of the Divine Spirit, nor become truly spiritual.

(1) John, xvi, 7.

APPLICATIONS. If in this respect, the visible Presence of Jesus Christ was an obstacle to the Apostles' reception of the Holy Ghost and of the fulness of His gifts, what should you think of your affections for many objects, to be deprived of which would trouble and distress you? Above all, what should you think of those affections which are too tender, of those passionate friendships which perhaps enthrall you? — Affections and friendships which alone rest on sympathy and the attraction of the senses; which frequently degenerate into familiarities and misplaced confidences; which keep you from thinking of God, and from enjoying that full and sweet serenity of conscience experienced solely by those whose thoughts and affections are all for God, who love nothing apart from God? Moreover, considering our proneness to evil, there is always the danger that these wholly natural affections may become inordinate or even sinful. What does experience tell you? What is there left for you to do?

AFFECTIONS. Lay on the altar of God's love every affection which has not the Lord your God as its foundation and object.

RESOLUTIONS. I will examine myself often on my affections and attachments.

POINT III. — THE INFLUENCE OF THE HOLY GHOST.

CONSIDERATIONS. *When he, the Spirit of truth is come, he will teach you all truth... He will convince the world of sin, and of justice, and of judgment* (1). When God's Holy Spirit really dwells in a soul, these two results are always

(1) John, xvi, 8, 13.

produced : first, a spirit of holiness which re-proves us for the least sin; it corrects and rectifies our erroneous judgments, and enables us to see the real insufficiency of our so-called goodness. Secondly, a spirit of enlightenment which instructs us in our duties, and helps us to understand and to esteem the eternal truths, enabling us continually to discover new means and new practices of advancing in perfection.

APPLICATIONS. Do you perceive, do you experience these wonderful effects of the Holy Spirit? And are you docile to them? Do you heed the inspirations awakened in your heart? If you must confess that you do not, the inference must surely be that you are not spiritually-minded, or that you are insensible, if not impervious to the attractions of grace? Should you not for this reason fear to merit the reproach which St. Stephen addressed to the Jews : *You stiffnecked... you always resist the Holy Ghost* (1).

COLLOQUY. With the Holy Ghost.

MONDAY.

AFTER THE MIRACULOUS DRAUGHT OF FISHES.

JESUS PERFORMS ANOTHER MIRACLE IN FAVOUR OF THE DISCIPLES.

—

I. *Prelude.* See Jesus on the shore with the seven disciples who witnessed the miraculous draught of fishes.

II. *Prelude.* Ask for a deeper knowledge and a more ardent love of Jesus, your Divine Model and Saviour.

(1) *Acts*, vii, 51.

POINT I. — JESUS PROVIDES THE DISCIPLES WITH FOOD
BY A MIRACLE.

CONSIDERATIONS. St. John relates that as soon as the ship containing the miraculous draught came to the land, they saw hot coals lying, and a fish laid thereon, and bread (1). They were hungry rather than overcome by fatigue, but how were they to be satisfied? Fire and bread would not have been obtainable in that desert place, they would have had far to go to procure them.

Their good Master provided everything by a fresh miracle, and they at once found all that they needed. Yet so that they might have the satisfaction of contributing something, and of tasting their fish, He says to them : *Bring hither of the fishes which you have now caught*. And He invites them to the meal saying : *Come, and dine* (2). What loving-kindness and tender consideration on the part of God towards His servants!

APPLICATIONS. He still acts daily in the same manner in regard to ourselves. He it is indeed who, by a continual miracle of His power and beneficence, makes the earth render a hundred-fold of what we give, permitting us to believe, granting the co-operation demanded from us, that we enjoy the fruit of our own labours. Again it is He, and He alone, Who by the assistance of grace gives a supernatural merit to our good actions; and nevertheless He rewards them in proportion to our efforts as

(1) John, xxi, 9. — (2) Id., 10-12.

though He wished to give us the satisfaction of thinking that we have made our own fortune, whilst in reality God crowns His own gifts in His elect, according to the beautiful words of St. Augustine : *Sua in nobis Deus dona coronat*. Do you often think of this indulgent goodness of God towards you? Are you not frequently wanting in the gratitude you owe Him by attributing to yourself too large a share in your good deeds?

AFFECTIONS. In all humility acknowledge that you owe all that you are and all that you have to the grace and goodness' of God, by saying with the Apostle : *By the grace of God I am what I am* (1). Ask forgiveness for having so often nourished thoughts of vanity and self-love.

RESOLUTIONS. To acquire the habit of seeing the goodness and generosity of God in all things.

POINT II. — JESUS REVEALS HIMSELF LITTLE BY LITTLE
TO HIS DISCIPLES.

CONSIDERATIONS. A remarkable circumstance connected with this appearance to the seven disciples is that, according to the account given by the Evangelist St. John who had pointed out the presence of Jesus to the others, *none of them who were at meat durst ask him : Who art thou? knowing that it was the Lord* (2). We must infer from this that Our Lord appeared to them in a way which veiled Him from their sight; therefore they could not see that

(1) I *Corin.*, xv, 10. — (2) John, xxi, 12.

it was He, but they knew it, the Gospel says; that is to say, they believed it without doubting. What gave them this faith? The exterior testimony of a miracle and the interior voice of grace.

APPLICATIONS. Is this not what takes place when we kneel in adoration before the Blessed Sacrament, or when we approach the holy Altar? We do not then see Jesus Christ : He is veiled from our eyes under the appearance of bread ; but we know that it is He ; we believe it absolutely, assured by the testimony of faith, and by the unction of grace from our Divine Saviour who speaks and acts within us. We should try therefore to imitate the disciples in their respect and love towards His adorable Person. Do you always do this?

AFFECTIONS. Declare that you firmly believe in the Real Presence of Jesus Christ hidden under the Eucharistic species, and that you desire to love Him as much as He deserves to be loved.

RESOLUTIONS. To ask ourselves frequently if our conduct corresponds with these declarations of faith and love.

POINT III. — JESUS DRAWS NEAR TO THE DISCIPLES
AND BREAKS THE BREAD TO GIVE THEM.

CONSIDERATIONS. Our Lord, desiring to extend His solicitude and goodness towards His loved disciples still further, *cometh*, says the Evangelist, *and taketh bread, and giveth them, and fish in like manner* (1).

(1) John, XXI, 13.

APPLICATIONS. Who does not see in this the representation and at the same time the pledge of that which our loving Saviour will do one day in the heavenly Kingdom for His faithful servants, as He explained at the Last Supper? *I am in the midst of you*, He says, *as he that serveth ; and you are they who have continued with me in my temptations ; and I dispose to you, as my Father hath disposed to me, a kingdom : that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom : and may sit upon thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel* (1). Rejoice at the thought of these encouraging and magnificent promises.

COLLOQUY. With our loving Saviour. Thank Him. Consecrate yourself afresh to His holy Service, with greatly increased love and generosity.

TUESDAY.

JESUS TESTS ST. PETER'S LOVE,

AND APPOINTS HIM HEAD OF THE CHURCH.

I. *Prelude.* Hear Our Lord saying to Peter : *Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these?*

II. *Prelude.* Ask for grace to excel in charity.

POINT I. — THE VOCATION OF ST. PETER TO THE SOVEREIGN PONTIFICATE.

CONSIDERATIONS. The miraculous draught of fishes must have reminded the disciples of the promise made by Jesus : *I will make you to be fishers of men* (2). Simon Peter had a greater

(1) Luke, xxii, 27-30. — (2) Matt., iv, 19.

share in it than the others, Providence having desired this because he was called to have a greater share in fishing for souls, and because he was destined to be placed at the head of the Apostles as Sovereign Pontiff. This eminent dignity demanded from him a more eminent degree of sanctity, and of charity, which is its complement. For this reason therefore, when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter : *Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? He saith to him : Yea Lord, thou knowest that I love thee. He saith to him : Feed my lambs (1).*

APPLICATIONS. You also have, by special graces and exceptional favours, been called to do greater things than the generality of the faithful. You also have been called to participate more largely in fishing for souls by means of the good works which are so numerous in our day ; but does not this noble vocation oblige you, before God and before man, to aim at a higher degree of charity or holiness? To you also Our Lord puts this question : *Lovest thou me more than these?* How should you answer Him who sees your innermost heart, and Whom you are bound to answer?

AFFECTIONS. To desire ardently to excel in charity : to be always able to say in all truth : *Yea Lord, thou knowest that I love thee*, and that I desire to love thee ever more and more.

RESOLUTIONS. Frequently to say this pious aspiration : *O most sweet Heart of Jesus! make me to love Thee more and more.*

(1) John, xxi, 15

POINT II. — ST. PETER'S TRIPLE DECLARATION OF LOVE.

CONSIDERATIONS. *He saith to him again : Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith to him : Yea Lord, thou knowest that I love thee. He saith to him : Feed my lambs. He saith to him the third time : Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me?... And he saith to him : Lord, thou knowest all things : thou knowest that I love thee. He saith to him : Feed my sheep* (1). By these last words : *Feed my sheep*, that is to say, not only the lambs, but also the mothers of the lambs, Jesus Christ confided the faithful and their shepherds to St. Peter, and placed them under his jurisdiction and under his lawful successors. He made him the sole visible head of His Church, that He might thus establish its unity until the end of time.

APPLICATIONS. Observe here in the first place with what modesty St. Peter speaks; he no longer says, as at the Last Supper, that he is certain of his love; he only appeals to the testimony of his Master Who knows the innermost heart. His weaknesses and past faults have made him humble and distrustful of self, but not distrustful of the goodness of his Lord. Imitate him in this, and you will draw, as he did, good from evil. Your faults and frailties, far from discouraging you, will make you more humble, and consequently more worthy to share in Divine favours : *For God resisteth the proud, but to the humble he giveth grace* (2). Then observe with what eagerness and glad-

(1) John, xxi, 16-17. — (2) 1 Peter, v, 5.

ness St. Peter takes advantage of the opportunity offered him to repair the scandal of his threefold denial by a threefold and fervent declaration of love. Should you happen to compromise, by a public fault, the dignity of your position, take advantage, in the same way, of the first opportunity to make amends.

AFFECTIONS. I shall ask Jesus to help me to love Him as I ought to love Him.

RESOLUTIONS. I will often ask myself . Am I, before God and before God and before men, what I ought to be?

POINT III. — THE GRIEF OF THE APOSTLE ST. PETER.

CONSIDERATIONS. *Peter was grieved*, says St. John, *because he said to him the third time, Lovest thou me* (1)? The poor fisherman of Galilee had just been raised by the Son of God Himself, to the highest dignity, to the crowning honour. We should imagine that this encouraging distinction would have pleased him, and given him happiness, yet the Evangelist tells us he was distressed and overcome with grief. What is the cause of this grief? The fear that he may not in reality have the love for his Divine Master which he believes he has; perhaps also the fear that he might fall a second time as in the house of Caiphas. The three questions of Our Lord have aroused this fear in his heart and made him oblivious to anything else.

APPLICATIONS. Happy the Christian in whom the love of God, and the desire to excel in that love, predominate over every other feeling and

(1) John, xxi, 17.

desire; who knows no other cause for fear or grief than that of decreasing in fervour and generosity in the service of the Lord his God.

COLLOQUY. With St. Peter. — Rejoice with him. — Ask him to obtain for you some share in the fervent love which Jesus communicated to his heart.

WEDNESDAY.

JESUS

FORETELLS ST. PETER'S MARTYRDOM AND REPROVES HIS CURIOSITY.

—

I. *Prelude.* Hear Jesus saying to St. Peter : *Follow me.*

II. *Prelude.* Ask for grace to follow Jesus faithfully in small things, so that you may also follow Him in difficult things

POINT I. — JESUS FORETELLS ST. PETER'S MARTYRDOM ON A CROSS.

CONSIDERATIONS. Three times had the Prince of the Apostles earnestly declared to his Divine Master the love which filled his heart. Yet the remembrance of his threefold denial still disquieted him. Was he quite certain that he would not fail should he meet with a similar trial like that which had caused his fall before ? This doubt troubled him. Jesus graciously reassured him by promising him solemnly that he would be faithful even unto death. Therefore He added : *Amen, amen I say to thee.... when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands.... and another.... shall lead thee whither thou wouldst not. And this he said,* remarks St. John, *signifying by what death he*

should glorify God (1). By the death of the cross, by martyrdom. In this way the Apostle was to testify his love for Jesus, and this was the reward given by Jesus for the fidelity with which His disciple would fulfil the arduous and immense duties connected with the high dignity He had conferred on him.

APPLICATIONS. Let us acquire the habit of seeing in the crosses sent us by God, the proof of His love for us, the means of corresponding with His love and of paying our debts. Then let us learn to fear rather than desire honours and positions of authority, *for a most severe judgment shall be for them that bear rule*, says the Holy Spirit (2). *For they watch as being to render an account of your souls*, adds St. Paul (3). Words which should be applied not only to ecclesiastical dignitaries and the clergy, but also to parents, masters and mistresses, for a great responsibility rests on them. The Christian who knows his duties dreads this responsibility : he prefers to obey rather than command. He submits to honours, but he does not seek them. What are your thoughts and dispositions on this subject?

AFFECTIONS. Declarations of love for Jesus Christ. — Fear and self-distrust.

RESOLUTIONS. To rejoice in subordination, humiliations and crosses in a spirit of faith.

POINT II. — JESUS TELLS PETER TO FOLLOW HIM.

CONSIDERATIONS. After Jesus had assured St.

(1) John, XXI, 18-19. — (2) *Wisdom*, vi, 6. — (3) *Heb.*, xiii, 17.

Peter that he would be faithful to the end, He moved forward and said to him : *Follow me* (1). What did Our Lord mean by giving His Apostle whom He had just prepared for his martyrdom, a command so easy to fulfil? Doubtless He wanted us to understand that if we are to be faithful in great things, we must be habitually faithful in small things, and that in order to be ready to endure difficult and heroic sacrifices when necessary, we should know how to make light and simple ones continually. Moreover, it is what He had expressly taught before His Passion, saying : *He that is faithful in that which is least, is faithful also in that which is greater* (2).

APPLICATIONS. It can be said that every day experience confirms this doctrine. In fact, those who are careful in observing the smallest obligations of their state of life, who fear to offend God even in the smallest matters, are never seen to fall into serious faults. There is no difficulty in observing in the lives of the Saints who shine with the aureole of martyrdom, that this exceptional grace was the reward of their fidelity in small things, and of the constant mortification which it implies. Before being martyrs to the faith, they had been martyrs to their duty, even in the smallest detail. Is this not the signification of that wonderful Antiphon chanted by the Church in the Office composed in their honour? *What trials the Saints endured that they might securely attain the palm of martyrdom!* « *Omnes sancti quanta passi*

(1) John, XXI, 10. — (2) Luke, XVI, 10.

sunt tormenta ut securi pervenirent ad palmam martyrii! »

AFFECTIONS. Rouse yourself to follow in the footsteps of those generous Christians, so that you may share in their glory and happiness. Ask for grace for that purpose.

RESOLUTIONS. To-day I will try particularly to fulfil all my duties with the intention of pleasing God. I will generously overcome all difficulties for love of Him.

POINT III. — JESUS REPROVES PETER'S CURIOSITY.

CONSIDERATIONS. *Peter turning about, saw that disciple whom Jesus loved following... and said... Lord, and what shall this man do? Jesus saith to him... So I will have him to remain till I come, what is it to thee? follow thou me (1).*

APPLICATIONS. Many people are continually tempted, often against their wills, to find out and interfere with the affairs of others, and to judge and interpret their words and actions in a wrong sense. If this kind of temptation comes to you, and above all, if you are not obliged in any way to watch them, repress it by saying to yourself what Our Divine Lord said to St. Peter: *What is it to thee?* An account will be demanded from you of your conduct, not of theirs. That is the best way to conquer the temptation. Have you made use of it when necessary? with what amount of constancy and success?

COLLOQUEY. With St. Peter the Apostle.

(1) John, xxi, 20-22.

THURSDAY.

THE APPEARANCE
TO THE FIVE HUNDRED DISCIPLES.

I. *Prelude.* Imagine Jesus in the midst of the five hundred disciples who are filled with joy at the sight of their Master.

II. *Prelude.* Ask Jesus to gladden and to strengthen you frequently by His sensible Presence.

POINT I. — THE DISCIPLES' EAGERNESS TO SEE JESUS.

CONSIDERATIONS. A few days before the Ascension, *the eleven disciples went into Galilee*, says St. Matthew, *unto the mountain where Jesus had appointed them* (1). *Then was he seen*, adds St. Paul, *by more than five hundred brethren at once* (2). This is the only appearance, the time and place of which were known beforehand. It had been announced by the angels and by Jesus Himself a long time before. Besides the number of those who witnessed it greatly exceeded that of the preceding appearances, since there were over five hundred present. Imagine with what intense enthusiasm the numerous disciples assembled at the appointed place, for most of them had not yet seen their risen Lord, and were actuated by the very natural desire to see the dead restored to life, and also by the more perfect desire of showing their reverence, their love and their gratitude; stimulated too, we may well imagine, with the hope of receiving special graces and favours with His benediction.

(1) Matt., xxviii, 16. — (2) 1 Corin., xv, 6.

APPLICATIONS. If in our day the appearance of Jesus were announced to take place in a particular place, how eagerly would men assemble there, even at the cost of a long and perilous journey? The sole thought of being in the Presence of God their Saviour, the Giver of all blessings, added to the hope of some signal favour, would make the most difficult journey pleasant and easy. Nevertheless, how marvellous it is that this God and Saviour is in the midst of these very men in innumerable churches; and what is the result? Instead of having recourse to Him, they leave Him alone. It is a mysterious inconsistency. You are ashamed and grieved at the thought, but are you not in some degree yourself guilty? How eager are you to go to the feet of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament? What joy is there in your heart in His holy Presence?

AFFECTIONS. Humble yourself for being remiss in visiting Jesus, and for your indifference in His Presence. Ask His forgiveness.

RESOLUTIONS. To strengthen your devotion to the Blessed Sacrament. To greet Jesus in the Sacrament of His love in heart or in words at least, when you are passing a church, even if you cannot enter.

POINT II. — THE WAVERING FAITH OF SOME
OF THE DISCIPLES.

CONSIDERATIONS. *And seeing him they adored; but,* adds St. Matthew, *some doubted* (1). the reality of the Resurrection, because their faith, their love was weak. Their distrust and irresolution was a sad contrast to the vivid

(1) Matt., xxviii, 17.

faith and joy of all the other disciples; they remained lukewarm or cold amidst the devout ardour and holy joy of their brethren. This must have been a cause of great pain to them, and also doubtless, to the Heart of Jesus.

APPLICATIONS. Is this not a picture of what we frequently see even in the best families? Amongst children who have been brought up with the noblest ideals of religion by a good mother, all giving the fairest hopes, are there not some who disappoint these hopes, who by their deplorable behaviour are a sad contrast to the exemplary conduct of their brothers and sisters; who become for them, for their parents and all the family, a cause for profound grief and constant anxiety?

AFFECTIONS. Give thanks to God for the grace granted you to remain faithful to the traditions of faith and devotion transmitted to you by virtuous parents, and if some member of your family is leading a sinful life, do not despair of making him renounce it. What is there that cannot be accomplished by assiduous love-added to prayer, and by invoking Her who is so justly called, the *Comforter of the afflicted, and Refuge of sinners*? Ask God for perseverance in virtue for yourself and all those dear to you.

RESOLUTIONS. To fear the smallest infidelities that you may not fall into indifference and irregularities.

POINT III. — THE REPROACH ADMINISTERED TO THE DISCIPLES.

CONSIDERATIONS. *He upbraided them with their incredulity and hardness of heart (1).*

(1) Mark., xvi, 14.

This reproach from the lips of Jesus did not proceed from impatience or anger, but from the interest and love He bore His disciples, who were unfaithful through a grievous error. They attributed the death of their Master to weakness, and consequently could not believe in His omnipotence. For this reason Jesus added to His reproof the explanation they required so that they might realise their errors and renounce them. *Then he opened their understanding that they might understand the Scriptures. And he said to them : Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise again from the dead the third day (1).*

APPLICATIONS. Learn from this in the first place, never to reprove any one out of vexation or resentment, but solely as a duty, and in charity; then, to explain clearly the reason of your reproof so that they may realise their wrong doings, and renounce them. Have you followed this rule?

COLLOQUY. With our Guardian Angel.

FRIDAY.

JESUS SENDS OUT HIS APOSTLES

TO PREACH AND BAPTISE THROUGHOUT THE WORLD.

I. *Prelude.* Hear Jesus Christ saying to His disciples : *All power is given to me in heaven and earth. Going therefore teach ye all nations (2).*

II. *Prelude.* Ask for grace to enable you to fulfil the mission which God has entrusted to you in society

(1) Luke, xxiv, 45-46. — (2) Matt., xxviii, 18-19.

POINT I. — OMNIPOTENCE IS GIVEN TO JESUS.

CONSIDERATIONS. Drawing near to the disciples Jesus said to them : *All power is given to me in heaven and earth*. How much these words mean, and what an exalted idea they should give us of Jesus, considered in His human nature. *All power is given to me in heaven* : therefore as a Sovereign He reigns over innumerable legions of angels, and He gives honour and distributes kingdoms to whomsoever He pleases, according to these words : *I dispose to you, as my Father disposed to me, a kingdom* (1). He sends down on His friends the gifts of the Holy Ghost, the treasures of sanctifying grace, of that grace which can, in a moment raise us to the most sublime perfection. — *All power is given to me on earth* : therefore He is the judge of life and death. Nothing can resist Him for all the powers of the world united to those of hell cannot without His permission, cause a hair to fall from the head of those who are protected by Him.

APPLICATIONS. Let us praise Jesus for the power and the glory He obtained through His humiliations and sufferings. Be glad and rejoice that you obeyed the gentle attractions of His saving grace, that you disdained the deceitful offers of the world, and that you have persevered until now in the service of a Master and King so mighty and magnanimous in His promises.

AFFECTIONS. Arouse in your heart unlimited trust, love and generosity. Ask God to deign to

(1) Luke, xxii, 29.

strengthen and perfect these virtues in you.

RESOLUTIONS. In temptations of pusillanimity or distrust, I will say with the Apostle : *I can do all things in him who strengtheneth me* (1).

POINT II. — THE COMMAND TO EVANGELISE THE WORLD
IS GIVEN TO THE DISCIPLES.

CONSIDERATIONS. By those words on which we have been meditating : *All power is given me...* Jesus prepared the Apostles to believe that they could fulfil the mission He desired to confide to them : the mission to evangelise all people on earth, and to unite them all in one family of brethren and believers, to form His kingdom upon earth, or His Church of which He had spoken to them so many times before His death and after His Resurrection. He therefore says to them : *Go ye into the whole world and preach the gospel to every creature* (2).

APPLICATIONS. Observe how Jesus does not accomplish this immense work of the conversion of the world Himself, but leaves the work to His Apostles; men who, considering their qualifications, were utterly incapable of doing it. Learn from this in the first place, if you have any post of authority, not to depend wholly on yourself as though no one else were capable of doing things well; then, never to shrink from fulfilling any of your duties because you think you are incapable. Rely on the assistance of Almighty God who is pleased to accomplish great things by means of feeble instruments; here we have the most striking proof of this.

(1) *Philip.*, iv, 13 — (2) *Mark*, xvi, 15.

AFFECTIONS. Revere and praise the infinite goodness of Jesus Christ who desires nothing but good for this world where He was ignored and rejected. Bless and thank Him for permitting you to be in His Church; ask for grace to be her faithful and devoted child until death.

RESOLUTIONS. To believe that you can do all things with the assistance of Almighty God.

POINT III. — THE COMMAND TO PREACH IS ADDED TO THE COMMAND TO BAPTISE IN THE NAME OF THE MOST HOLY TRINITY.

CONSIDERATIONS. After having said : *Going therefore teach ye all nations*, Jesus immediately added : *baptising them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost* (1). Therefore it is by the profession of faith in the Holy Trinity, and by baptism administered in the Name of Three Divine Persons, that Jesus Christ receives the faithful into His Church. It is also by invoking the Three Adorable Persons, and by the sign which reminds us of the instrument of our redemption, that our Divine Saviour intended that we should have until the end of time, an armour against the assaults of the devil, a safeguard in danger, a definite sign, a public profession of faith, and a reminder of the immense benefits we owe to the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost.

APPLICATIONS. Endeavour to make the sign of the Cross with care and devotion always, so that you may gain all its advantages.

COLLOQUY. With the Three Persons of the most Holy Trinity.

(1) Matt., xxviii, 19.

SATURDAY.

THE CONTINUATION OF THE PRECEDING SUBJECT :
THE ORGANISATION OF THE CHURCH.

- I. *Prelude*. See the Apostles around Jesus listening to Him.
 II. *Prelude*. Ask for the spirit of faith and zeal which was given to the Apostles.

POINT I. -- THE DEPOSIT OF FAITH IS ENTRUSTED
TO THE APOSTLES.

CONSIDERATIONS. It is by the bond of faith, by belief in the same dogmas, the same Sacraments, and the same moral precepts that all the nations of the earth must be united to form the heritage of the Church of Christ until the end of time. Our Lord had therefore, before ascending into heaven, to provide for the unity and indefectibility of the faith which He had preached to men, the deposit of which He had entrusted to the Apostles. This He did, first, by commanding them to teach men to believe and practise all that He had taught without adding or diminishing anything. *Teaching them*, He said, *to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you* (1). Secondly, by sending them the Holy Ghost, *the Spirit of truth* (2). And, He adds, *I send the promise of my Father upon you* (3). Thirdly, by assuring them that infallibility, in regard to dogma and morals, would continue for ever in the person of the successor of St. Peter, to whom He had said : *I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not* (4).

APPLICATIONS. Nineteen centuries have passed

(1) Matt., xxviii, 20. — (2) John, xvi, 13. — (3) Luke, xxiv, 49.
 — (4) Id., xxii, 32.

since Jesus thus organised His Church, and we still see her to-day, the same as He established her. She alone has remained inviolate and stable amidst the changes and confusion in the world. The deposit of faith entrusted to her by her divine Founder in the person of the first Apostles has reached us unimpaired. By following the chain of tradition, any of us can ascertain that we believe and profess the same doctrines proclaimed by Jesus Christ and His Apostles; and that we are consequently in the true Church militant upon earth, from which we may hope to pass into the Church triumphant of His elect in heaven.

AFFECTIONS. Admiration. — Joyfulness of heart. — Gratitude. — An ardent desire to assist in the propagation of the faith.

RESOLUTIONS. I will rouse myself to take an active part in some good work with these words of the Apostle : *Fight the good fight of faith : lay hold on eternal life whereunto thou art called* (1).

POINT II — SALVATION IS PROMISED TO TRUE BELIEVERS.

CONSIDERATIONS. *He that believeth and is baptised, shall be saved ; but he that believeth not shall be condemned* (2). If we meditate carefully on these words of Jesus Christ, we shall find in them a great cause both of joy and fear; of joy, because they show us a secure and simple road leading to eternal salvation; of fear, because they declare the condemnation not only of obstinate heretics, but also in different degrees, of two kinds of Catholics unfor-

(1) 1 Tim., vi, 12. — (2) Mark, xvi, 16

tunately only too numerous in these days. They are an explicit condemnation of those who speak scornfully of certain dogmas, or who approve of the pernicious maxim : It matters little what we believe provided we lead a good life ; — and an implicit condemnation of those who, though they adhere out of respect to all the dogmas, yet lead a life which is little in accordance with their faith ; for *faith without works is dead*, says St. James (1). And *the Son of Man*, says our Lord, *will render to every man according to his works* (2).

APPLICATIONS. Are you not included in this latter category to a certain extent ? Go over in your mind what you believe concerning the malice, and the pernicious effects of venial sin ; concerning the obligations of your state of life ; concerning the reverence due to God everywhere, but above all in church ; concerning the extreme importance of fighting against your predominant fault, and then see how your conduct conforms with your belief ; in other words, examine your practical faith.

AFFECTIONS. Salutary shame at the thought of your inconsistencies ; accuse yourself of them before God, and ask His pardon.

RESOLUTIONS. From to-day I will endeavour to make my conduct more conformable with my faith.

POINT III. — THE GIFT OF MIRACLES IS PROMISED
TO THE EARLY CHRISTIANS.

CONSIDERATIONS. Jesus then promises to support the Apostles' preaching, and the faith of

(1) *James*, ii, 20. — (2) *Matt.*, xvi, 27.

the newly converted, by miracles : *And these signs shall follow them that believe : In my name they shall cast out devils : they shall speak with new tongues, they shall take up serpents : and if they shall drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them : they shall lay their hands upon the sick, and they shall recover* (1). All this was fulfilled literally ; it has been attested by history.

APPLICATIONS. Admire the beneficence and wisdom of God who always proportions the means to the end. To persuade the Gentiles to accept the faith, He bestows miracles, then once it has been accepted and has a firm foundation, He ceases to grant those gifts so lavishly in order to leave all the merit to the faith of believers.

AFFECTIONS Praises. — Blessings. — Thanksgivings.

COLLOQUY. With Jesus.

Fifth week after Easter.

SUNDAY.

ON THE GOSPEL FOR THE DAY.

REASONS FOR CONFIDENCE IN PRAYER.

I. *Prelude.* Listen to Jesus saying to His disciples. *Amen. Amen I say to you : if you ask the Father anything in my name, he will give it you* (2).

II. *Prelude.* Ask for an ever increasing faith and confidence in prayer.

POINT I. — REASONS FOR CONFIDENCE IN REGARD TO GOD.

CONSIDERATIONS. One of the principal causes

(1) Mark, xvi, 17-18. — (2) John, xvi, 23.

of the inefficacy of our prayers is want of confidence. Yet how many reasons we have for praying with the utmost confidence, and with the certainty of being heard ! Reasons in regard to God, to ourselves, and in regard to our neighbour when we use intercessory prayer. In regard to God, remember He is Almighty, therefore He can grant us all we ask ; He is omnipresent, therefore He hears all our supplications, and the most secret aspirations of our hearts ; He is the most loving of Fathers, and He desires our good as much and more than we do ourselves ; therefore He wants to give us everything that is for our good. If these indisputable truths still leave any doubt or distrust in your mind, they must surely be dispelled by those very definite words of our Lord : *Amen, I say to you : if you ask the Father anything in my name, he will give it you.*

APPLICATIONS. How is it that though we admit these truths, we usually pray with so little confidence ? Is it not because our petitions are accompanied by a certain intuition that they ought not to be heard ? — or because we imagine some immense distance between God and ourselves where our cries of distress will be lost ? — or because we look upon God only as a severe Judge Who is angry with us on account of our past sins, our infidelities, or our daily imperfections ? Let us examine ourselves on these causes of distrust, all the more carefully as they are seldom the result of reasoning, but very often influence us without our knowledge, and without attracting our notice.

AFFECTIONS. United in spirit to the Apostles when they said to our Lord : *Increase our*

faith, ask Jesus for an increase of faith and confidence, in His infinite Goodness.

RESOLUTIONS. I will always repel every thought of distrust.

POINT II. — REASONS IN REGARD TO OURSELVES.

CONSIDERATIONS. A reason which above all should help us to pray with absolute confidence, is the thought and intimate knowledge of our own weakness and spiritual misery. God demands, in virtue of the promises made at our baptism, that we should aspire to holiness. We all desire to attain this. We desire it, but we feel powerless to attain it without His help and the constant assistance of grace. Our Divine Lord clearly taught this : *Without me*, that is to say, without the help of My grace, *you can do nothing* (1), which has spiritual merit; but He immediately adds : *You shall ask whatever you will, and it shall be done unto you* (2). If it were not so, God would be asking for impossibilities, which is absurd.

APPLICATIONS. The result of this consideration is a practical conclusion which is very consoling and encouraging, namely that the more we feel that we are frail and incapable of rising from our sins, of giving up our bad habits and lukewarmness, the more reason we have for counting on the efficacy of our prayers. Is this not obvious? Yet have not your actions contradicted it? Have you not lost courage after your falls? — have you not given way to discouragement? And when a distaste for spiritual things, or lukewarmness, has endeavoured to

(1) John, xv, 5. — (2) *Id*, 7.

take possession of your soul, have you not ceased praying, or at least, lost confidence in your prayers as though God would not hear you? — Acknowledge your wrong-doings, and avoid falling into them again.

AFFECTIONS. The more dejected I feel under the weight of my misery, the more confidently and hopefully shall I cry to Thee, Lord, to hear me.

RESOLUTIONS. In times of despair, I will say with King David : *My soul hath cleaved to the pavement : quicken thou me according to thy word* (1).

POINT III. — REASONS IN REGARD TO YOUR NEIGHBOUR.

CONSIDERATIONS. Three thoughts should naturally give us great confidence when we pray for others, particularly for sinners and for persons who are specially recommended to our prayers; first, the thought that we are performing an act which is pleasing to God; secondly, that we are fulfilling a duty; thirdly, that we are disinterested, for we can intercede with more confidence for another than for ourselves, and with all the more confidence in proportion to his need.

APPLICATIONS. When you see the extreme wickedness and Sin around you, or the uselessness of your efforts to bring back to the right way, those who are entrusted to your care, do not regard them as hopeless; do not abandon them to their fate by ceasing to pray for them. Never contemplate such conduct, for it is inconsistent with charity and is supremely insulting to God.

(1) *Ps.* CXVIII, 25.

COLLOQUY. With the Saint whose feast is celebrated on this day.

MONDAY.

THE THREE ROGATION DAYS.

I. *Prelude.* Imagine the procession of the faithful towards the station or termination of the rogations.

II. *Prelude.* Ask for grace to enter into the spirit which the Church desires to inculcate in her children to-day.

POINT I. — THE ORIGIN OF THE ROGATION DAYS.

CONSIDERATIONS. The origin of the Rogation days, or three days of public prayer and abstinence which immediately precede the Feast of the Ascension, dates from the time of St. Mamertus, Bishop of Vienne in Dauphiné, about the 5th century. After the Burgundians invaded that part of Viennese Gaul, not a year passed without the country being afflicted with great calamities, which were regarded as chastisements from God. The desolation was general. The year 470 was particularly disastrous for the city of Vienne. It was then that the holy Bishop, to appease Divine justice, made a vow to establish yearly Rogations or public prayers and processions in his diocese. The people ratified the vow made by their Shepherd. He fixed the Rogations for the three days preceding the Ascension, prescribed a fast, and appointed three churches outside the precincts of the city as stations or terminations of the processions. The Rogations had a most favourable result, for the scourge was removed. The other bishops in Gaul adopted them in succession in their dioceses; and Pope Leo III, at the end

of the 8th century made the observance of Rogation days obligatory for all the Latin Church. But in consideration of the Paschal season he changed the fast into an abstinence.

APPLICATIONS. Let us admire Divine Providence which repeatedly makes use of what would seem adverse circumstances to introduce new practices of devotion, and by this means maintains the faith and fervour of the faithful. Do not ever criticise the judgment of the Church regarding certain devotions due to the initiative of devout persons or Congregations.

AFFECTIONS. Praise and bless the Fatherly Providence of God which is ever solicitous of the needs of our body and soul.

RESOLUTIONS. I will endeavour to enter to-day into the spirit of the Church, and to attain what she desires.

POINT II. — THE AIM OF THE ROGATIONS.

CONSIDERATIONS. In order to conform to the spirit of the Church during these three days, we should constantly keep in mind the ends she intends to attain. What are they? Not only deliverance from some passing danger, but also our preservation from the innumerable ills of body and soul, which continually threaten us; for us to obtain all that is necessary for our welfare, spiritual as well as temporal, and particularly to draw down the blessing of God on the fruits of the earth, especially at that time of the year when great hopes bring great fears.

APPLICATIONS. Above all it is you, faithful souls, who should make great and generous efforts to attain the ends proposed by the Church. You should mediate between an offended God

and guilty men, to spare them, by your prayers and works of reparation, the punishment incurred by their sins. It is a mission as beautiful as it is meritorious, as well as a duty, so try to fulfil it worthily.

AFFECTIONS. *We beseech Thee, that Thou wouldst pardon us, — We beseech Thee, that thou wouldst vouchsafe to humble the enemies of Holy Church. — We beseech Thee, that Thou wouldst vouchsafe to give and preserve the fruits of the earth, hear us, O Lord (1).*

RESOLUTIONS. I shall consider myself during these three days as a victim of expiation immolated for the glory of God.

POINT III. — THE MEANS OF ATTAINING THE AIMS
OF THE ROGATIONS.

CONSIDERATIONS. The end intended by the Church through the institution of the Rogations being the public and general welfare, she provides the necessary means. She orders public and solemn prayers accompanied by processions, to which all are invited, during which the Litanies of the Saints are sung. In these public prayers of the Church are mentioned all the necessities of states, families and individuals. What blessings people might obtain by these universal supplications organised by the Church, if they faithfully fulfilled all that is required of them during these three days!

APPLICATIONS. If you cannot join in the Rogation processions, and in the chanting of the Litanies, at least say these litanies in church for the three days during the Divine Service,

(1) Litany of the Saints

or if you are prevented from doing that, then say them at home, uniting yourself in spirit and intention with the faithful in all parts of the world.

COLLOQUY. This will consist in repeating some invocations from the litanies which relate in particular to the necessities of the present day.

TUESDAY.

THE LAST APPEARANCE OF JESUS

BEFORE HIS ASCENSION.

I. *Prelude.* See Jesus seated at table in the midst of His eleven disciples.

II. *Prelude.* Ask for grace to share in the sublime feelings inspired in them by Jesus.

POINT I. — THE PREDILECTION OF JESUS FOR HIS DISCIPLES.

CONSIDERATIONS. *At length he appeared to the eleven as they were at table*, says St. Mark (1). These words of the Evangelist clearly demonstrate that this appearance took place for the Apostles exclusively, whose number was reduced to eleven since the apostasy of Judas. Therefore it was on them that Jesus desired to bestow the last moments of His glorious life on earth, just as He had given them the last moments of His mortal life. And by seating Himself at table with them, which is a mark of the greatest intimacy between friends, He desired to give them in both cases a proof of His singular love for them. Why had Our Lord this predilection for His Apostles? First, because they had been given. Him by His

(1) Mark, xvi, 14.

Father to co-operate in the salvation of men, according to these words : *Holy Father, those whom thou gavest me have I kept* (1). Secondly, because, when He called them, they abandoned all to follow Him. *We have left all things, and have followed thee* (2), and thirdly, because they were destined to labour and suffer more for Him than the other disciples.

APPLICATIONS. You too have received many marks of special love. Are you not amongst those who have the inestimable advantage of being born of good devout Christian parents with more than sufficient money to provide for all your needs; the advantage of a good education; of preserving your baptismal innocence, or of regaining it before you were overtaken by death? And should you not add to all that, a great many exceptional favours in the order of grace, which are known to yourself alone? How many proofs of special love have you received then from God, and how real is your gratitude? How have you proved it?

AFFECTIONS. Humble yourself for having until now done so little for Jesus in comparison with all His blessings. Think what you might have done, and what so many others, who are less favoured than you, do for Him.

RESOLUTIONS. To be more generous and more self-sacrificing in the service of God and my neighbour.

POINT II. — THE ASSURANCE OF HIS PROTECTION.

CONSIDERATIONS. The hour was drawing near

(1) John, xvii, 12. — (2) Matt., xix, 27.

when the Apostles and disciples would be for ever, in this world, deprived of the visible Presence of their Divine Master. This thought naturally caused them anxiety and deep Sorrow. In order to reassure and comfort them, Jesus told them that He would seem to be away from them, but that in reality He would be always near them, to assist and protect them. He most definitely declared this, saying : *Behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world* (1).

APPLICATIONS. Jesus Christ is in reality still with us to-day, not only as God by His Infinity, but as Man by His corporal Presence in the Blessed Sacrament, and, it may be said in a manner which is more helpful for us than before His Ascension. He was then only present successively in one place; to-day He is present in innumerable places simultaneously amongst the faithful. At that time He could only communicate intimately with them by entering their houses, thus becoming their Guest; to-day, He comes to us and enters our hearts, becoming our Food, and thus identifying Himself with us through Holy Communion. *He that eateth my flesh He says, and drinketh my blood, abideth in me. I in him* (2). Have you ever pondered well over this?

AFFECTIONS. Acts of admiration and warmest gratitude for so much loving-kindness, condensation and bounteousness on the part of God the Saviour towards all men and towards me in particular.

RESOLUTIONS. To prove my gratitude by a

(1) Matt., xxviii, 20. — (2) John, vi, 57.

greater eagerness in visiting and receiving our Lord in Holy Communion.

POINT III. — THE PROMISE OF THE APPROACHING DESCENT OF THE HOLY GHOST.

CONSIDERATIONS. The Apostles were conscious of their ignorance and their extreme frailty. They could not think of the magnitude and difficulty of their mission without fear and anxiety. How did Our Lord encourage them? He prepared them for the imminent coming of the Holy Ghost by saying : *Stay you in the city, till you be endued with power from on high* (1).

APPLICATIONS. The intimate knowledge of your insufficiency, of your weakness and spiritual wretchedness is good and profitable, but be careful that it does not drive you to despair. If you are thus tempted, have recourse to Jesus, and invoke the Holy Ghost with confidence. You will soon be enlightened and strengthened. Have you not fallen into discouragement, and consequently into sin, because you have neglected to do this at the right time? What will you do in the future?

COLLOQUY. With the blessed Apostles.

WEDNESDAY.

GENERAL REFLECTIONS

ON THE APPEARANCES OF JESUS.

I. *Prelude.* Imagine the joy experienced by the disciples every time that Jesus appeared to them.

II. *Prelude.* Ask Jesus to manifest Himself frequently to your soul until you are united to Him in heaven.

(1) Luke, xxiv, 49.

POINT I. — THE NUMBER AND REASONS
OF THE APPEARANCES.

CONSIDERATIONS. The Evangelists have limited themselves to recording the nine appearances which form the subject of the preceding meditations. But it is evident by the context of the Gospels, that their number was considerably greater. We can reasonably conclude this, especially from these words of St. Luke : *He shewed himself alive after his passion by many proofs, for forty days appearing to them and speaking of the kingdom of God* (1). What reason had Our Lord for these frequent appearances to His Apostles and disciples? They were to strengthen them in the belief of His Resurrection; to make His definite separation from them less hard; and above all, to prove by these visible manifestations that He was always invisibly present with them.

APPLICATIONS. Our Lord still acts in this way with holy souls; besides being with them always invisibly, He appears to them still from time to time in a special manner, by enabling them to realise His Presence, sometimes by clear visions, and sometimes by ecstasies of joy and love. This frequently occurs in Holy Communion when He causes them to realise by manifest signs that the Bread they eat is *the living bread which came down from heaven* (2). Have you never felt these effects of the Real Presence of our Divine Saviour? Should this rarely happen,

(1) *Acts*, i, 3. — (2) *John*, vi, 51.

more rarely than you desire, do not be over anxious, for sensible graces are neither a proof nor condition of sanctity.

AFFECTIONS. Ask Jesus to prepare your soul to receive these spiritual visits which produce such sweet and salutary fruit.

RESOLUTIONS. I will examine myself to know if I prevent these manifestations of our Lord's Presence by habitual infidelities.

POINT II. — THE TIME AND PLACE OF THE APPEARANCES

CONSIDERATIONS. It is impossible to ascertain the order of the appearances so oft repeated during these forty days, either as to time or place, for they did not succeed each other in regular order. They were more or less frequent, apparently according to the dispositions and desires of those to whom they were granted; neither did they take place at any fixed place or time, but in the morning or evening, in the day or night, sometimes in a house or sometimes outside.

APPLICATIONS. These observations should not be lost on us, for they teach us that neither position nor employment, nor occupations, however distracting, need be obstacles to the interior communications between God and our soul; and that we should never lose hope that we shall again receive these sweet communications when we have been deprived of them for a considerable period. What is important is that we should prepare ourselves for them by great purity of heart and fervent desires.

AFFECTIONS. Acts of faith concerning these truths. — A burning desire manifested by

these aspirations of the Prophet King : *Remember us, O Lord... visit us with thy salvation* (1).

RESOLUTIONS. To repeat this aspiration frequently to-day.

POINT III. — THE MANNER AND DURATION
OF THE APPEARANCES.

CONSIDERATIONS. The appearances especially resembled each other in that they were vouchsafed only to the Apostles and disciples, and they were sudden, unexpected, and of short duration. Jesus appeared at the moment they least expected Him, and almost always disappeared from their view when they were most enjoying the charm of His Presence and conversation.

APPLICATIONS. Jesus acted in this manner to show us that He reserves His favours for those who are wholly devoted to Him; secondly, to make us desire His Presence and its accompanying consolations, yet without too great an attachment to them, since they will be complete and lasting only in heaven; finally, to persuade us to keep a constant watch over ourselves, in order to be prepared to receive His visits.

COLLOQUY. With Jesus leaving earth to ascend to heaven, there to be crowned with glory and honour, and *to prepare a place for you* (2). Give thanks to Him for all He did for you while on earth. Ask to be specially remembered as did the penitent thief : *Lord remember me when thou shalt come into thy kingdom* (3).

(1) *Ps.* cv, 4. — (2) *John*, xiv, 2 — (3) *Luke*, xxiii, 42.

THURSDAY.

THE FEAST OF THE ASCENSION

OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST.

I. *Prelude.* See Jesus ascending from the midst of His disciples.

II. *Prelude.* Ask for grace to experience some of the feelings which filled the hearts of the Apostles at this moment.

POINT I. — THE MYSTERIES OF THE FEAST
OF THE ASCENSION.

CONSIDERATIONS. Let us contemplate the glorious Ascension of our Divine and loving Saviour with joy and happiness. St. Luke relates its circumstances in these words : *He shewed himself alive after his passion, by many proofs, for forty days appearing to his apostles, and speaking of the Kingdom of God (1). And he led them out as far as Bethania; and lifting up his hands he blessed them, and it came to pass whilst he blessed them, he departed from them (2) and... while they looked on, he was raised up : and a cloud received him out of their sight (3) and was taken up into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God (4). And while they were beholding him going up to heaven, behold two men stood by them in white garments, who also said : Ye men of Galilee, why stand you looking up to heaven? This Jesus who is taken up from you into heaven shall so come as you have seen him going into heaven. Then they returned*

(1) Acts, i, 3. — (2) Luke, xxiv, 50-51. — (3) Acts, i, 9.
— (4) Mark, xvi, 19.

to Jerusalem, from the mount that is called Olivet (1), ...with great joy (2).

APPLICATIONS. Let us endeavour, to-day in particular, to keep continually before our eyes the glorious sight of Jesus slowly ascending in the air, penetrating the clouds and making His triumphant entry into heaven; advancing through the midst of the Angelic choir, to the throne of His Father, Who crowns Him with glory and gives Him full power over all His enemies, as foretold in an ecstasy by holy King David in these words : *Sit thou at my right hand : until I make thy enemies thy footstool (3).* Ask Jesus to draw our hearts to Himself, « so that in the midst of earthly things that change our hearts may there dwell, where true joys are found (4) ».

AFFECTIONS. Rejoice over the triumph of Jesus. Praise Him for the glory and ineffable joys He gained by His humiliations and sufferings.

RESOLUTIONS. To be strong in the determination to work and suffer much with Jesus and for Him, in order to share more abundantly in His glory and joy.

POINT II. THE JOYS OF THE FEAST OF THE ASCENSION.

CONSIDERATIONS. It is related that the disciples returned to Jerusalem *with great joy*, at a time when we would imagine them overwhelmed with grief over their bitter parting. What was the cause of their joy? Why did they rejoice? Because their beloved Master entered His

(1) *Acts*, i, 10-12. — (2) *Luke*, xxiv, 52. — (3) *Psa.* cix, 2. — (4) Collect, 4th Sunday after Easter.

Kingdom as a Conqueror. Because by entering into His Kingdom, He opened its gates which had been closed through the sin of our first parents to all men. Because by thus exalting His human nature, He ennobled ours and made it worthy to contemplate the Divine Nature. Because He had assured them that He ascended into heaven to prepare a place for them, and to be an Intercessor for them with His Father. *I go to prepare a place for you*, He had said, *and I will ask the Father* (1).

APPLICATIONS. Make these the reasons for your joy also on this glorious day. Meditate on them carefully; engrave the memory of them deeply on your mind, so that nothing may efface them, and your joy, says Our Lord, *no man shall take from you* (2); for even in the midst of whatever tribulations, you will exclaim with the Apostle : *I am filled with comfort ; I exceedingly abound with joy in all our tribulation* (3). *For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us : so also by Christ doth our comfort abound* (4).

AFFECTIONS. How contemptible earth appears when I contemplate heaven (5). Having *a desire to be dissolved and to be with Christ* (6).

RESOLUTIONS. To-day and throughout the Octave I will contemplate the skies and the splendour of creation to arouse my spiritual joy, saying in the words of Pope St. Gregory : If there are such beautiful things in our exile, what will there be in our home?

(1) John, xiv, 2, 16. — (2) Id., xvi, 22. — (3) II Corin., vii, 4. — (4) *Ibid.*, i, 5. — (5) St. Ignatius. — (6) *Philipp.*, i, 23.

POINT III — THE FRUITS OF THE FEAST OF THE ASCENSION.

CONSIDERATIONS. The memory of the joyous mysteries of this day, and the promises made by Jesus to His Apostles, filled them with courage and constancy for every trial. They all met torments and death with joy. *Rejoicing that they were accounted worthy to suffer reproach for the name of Jesus* (1), and by exclaiming : *The sufferings of this time are not worthy to be compared with the glory to come, that shall be revealed in us* (2).

APPLICATIONS. You shall reap similar fruits from this feast and this meditation if you keep it faithfully. The memory of it alone, by raising your thoughts to heaven, will enable you to rise superior to all difficulties, above yourself and all your weaknesses. Ask your Divine Saviour to impress it indelibly on your soul.

COLLOQUY. With Jesus ascending into heaven. — Praise Him — Rejoice with Him — Beg Him to bless you as He blessed the Apostles and disciples.

FRIDAY.

First day of the Novena.

A NOVENA TO THE HOLY GHOST.

REASONS FOR MAKING IT.

1. *Prelude.* See the Apostles and disciples assembled round Our Lady in the Cenacle.

II. *Prelude.* Ask for an ardent desire, and an effective will, so that you may make this Novena well.

(1) *Acts*, v, 41. — (2) *Rom.* xiii, 18.

POINT I. — THE EXCELLENCE OF THE NOVENA
IS THE FIRST MOTIVE FOR MAKING IT WELL.

CONSIDERATIONS. Immediately after the Ascension, the Apostles returned to Jerusalem, and acting on the command they had received from their Divine Master, they remained enclosed in the Cenacle with Mary the Mother of Jesus and the other disciples, numbering one hundred and twenty. There they continued in prayer, waiting for the coming of the Holy Ghost, during nine days. From this fact arose the practice of preparing for certain feasts by a Novena of prayer and good works. But the distinctive feature of the Novena of Pentecost is, that it has come down to us from the Apostles. They were the first to make it. Therefore we may say that it is an apostolic institution, and in a sense a Divine institution, since the Apostles made it in obedience to a formal command they had received from Jesus Christ. You can thus judge of its excellence, and of the fervour with which we should observe it.

APPLICATIONS. In order to obtain the graces and favour which God has attached to this exceptional Novena for you, arouse in yourself an ardent desire, or rather a firm determination to make it really well ; — decide at once what you wish to do each day of the novena : the prayers, the good works, the mortifications etc., — and then choose a patron Saint for the Novena who will plead your cause before God.

AFFECTIONS. Rouse yourself to commence the Novena with great fervour. — Place it under the protection of Mary who made it with the Apostles. — Decide on the special fruit you

desire to obtain from it. — Conceive a firm hope that you will obtain it.

RESOLUTIONS. To arrange the practical details of the Novena without delay. — To put them into practice to-day, the first day of the Novena.

POINT II. — THE AIM AND BENEFITS OF THE NOVENA
ARE THE SECOND MOTIVE FOR MAKING IT WELL.

CONSIDERATIONS. Why did our Lord command His Apostles to make this Novena? That they might prepare themselves in this way to receive the gifts of the Holy Ghost, without which they would have remained for ever, weak in themselves, of no use to others, and absolutely incapable of attaining the double aim of their sublime vocation, but with the help of which they would be able to accomplish all things easily and with certainty.

APPLICATIONS. Why should you make this Novena with great fervour? For the same reasons. For after all, you are not better than the Apostles. You are no less incapable than they, without the assistance of the Holy Ghost, of ever rising to the height of your vocation to Christianity, of attaining the holiness demanded of you by this vocation, and thus becoming of service to others according to the designs of God.

AFFECTIONS. Acknowledge your frailty and powerlessness to realise the good desires of your heart; say in all humility with the Apostle: *To will is present with me, but to accomplish that which is good, I find not* (1). Add ardent invocations to the Holy Ghost to this

(1) *Rom.*, vii, 18.

humble acknowledgment, in order to share abundantly in the distribution of His gifts.

RESOLUTIONS. I will repeat these invocations often during the day.

POINT III. — THE NECESSITY OF THE NOVENA
IS THE THIRD MOTIVE FOR MAKING IT WELL.

CONSIDERATIONS. When our Divine Lord promised the Holy Ghost to His Apostles that they might be filled with superhuman power, He brought forward a third reason to urge them to prepare themselves carefully for receiving Him : the iniquity of the world, the evils of the times in which they lived, the snares they would encounter, and the persecution and ill-treatment they would have to endure : *In the world you shall have distress (1). And you shall be hated by all men for my name's sake (2). They shall deliver you up to councils (3), and some of you they will put to death (4), all these things they will do to you for my name sake (5).*

APPLICATIONS. The evils of the present day, and the fury of the wicked against the religion of Jesus Christ and against all the laity, priests and religious who defend it have not lessened in our day. We are surrounded by snares, temptations and persecution. What prudence, true virtue and superhuman courage are necessary therefore to escape danger and to triumph over all our enemies! Where can we find all this, if not in the gifts of the Spirit of counsel, fortitude and piety?

COLLOQUY. With the Blessed Virgin, who

(1) John., xvi, 33. — (2) Matt., x, 22. — (3) Matt., x, 17. — (4) Luke, xxi, 16. — (5) John, xv, 21.

was as the soul of the Apostles during the nine days they prepared themselves for the coming of the Holy Ghost.

SATURDAY.

Second day of the Novena.

THE WAY TO MAKE THE NOVENA.

I. *Prelude.* Imagine the Cenacle, and the Apostles assembled there with Mary and the disciples, preparing themselves for the coming of the Holy Ghost.

II. *Prelude.* Ask for grace to understand how they prepared themselves, in order to imitate them.

POINT I. — THE RETIREMENT AND RECOLLECTION OF THE APOSTLES.

CONSIDERATIONS. St. Augustine says that God desires to communicate the gifts of His Holy Spirit abundantly to us, but He wishes us to prepare ourselves to receive them. How should we prepare ourselves? The example of the Apostles teaches us in a better way than the most eloquent sermon. In the first place, they retired to the Cenacle, an elevated spot far from the dissipations of the world: they remained there in recollection, only interrupting the silence by pious conversation; they watched over themselves and meditated on all that they had learnt from the lips of Jesus, notably on the attributes and wonderful operations of the Holy Ghost whom He had promised to them.

APPLICATIONS. Above all then, if I desire to receive an abundant outpouring of the gifts of the Holy Ghost, I must strive during the days of this Novena to be recollected, more recollected than usual; observing with greater care the

particular rule I have determined to follow, watching more strictly over my senses and the disordered impulses of my heart, in order to avoid all sin, which is the chief obstacle to interior peace, and the reception of God's gifts.

AFFECTIONS. Earnestly ask for grace to understand what is the cause of your almost habitual dissipation of mind, and for the necessary strength to avoid or to conquer it.

RESOLUTIONS. During this Novena, I will give special attention in my self-examinations to recollection, and all that it implies.

POINT II. — THE APOSTLES' PRAYER; THEIR UNITY.

CONSIDERATIONS. The Apostles added prayer to recollection, prayer continual and persevering, mindful of the words of their Divine Master : *Your father from heaven will give the good spirit to them that ask him* (1). And what made their prayers most efficacious and pleasing to God was that they were said in common, all of them uniting together and sending up the same appeal to heaven to obtain the same favour. The efficacy of this form of prayer had been taught them by Jesus when He said : *I say to you, that if two of you shall consent upon earth, concerning anything whatsoever they shall ask, it shall be done to them by my Father who is in heaven* (2).

APPLICATIONS. It is therefore necessary for you to pray much during this Novena ; for you to say your customary prayers with more care, and to add some others, specially addressed to the Holy Ghost. We cannot doubt that these

(1) Luke, xi, 13 — (2) Matt., xviii, 19

prayers will be pleasing to God, and will deserve to be heard, especially if you can join with other members of your family in such a way that there may be unanimity in your desires and supplications, in the same way as in the Cenacle where *all these*, according to St. Luke, *were persevering with one mind in prayer* (1).

AFFECTIONS. I shall ask God to strengthen my faith, hope and confidence concerning all that the holy Evangelists teach us about the efficacy of prayer.

RESOLUTIONS. To-day, and every day of the Novena I will address some special prayers to the Holy Ghost, and that they may not be forgotten, I shall decide on the time when I can best say them.

POINT III. — THE APOSTLES HAVE RECOURSE TO MARY.

CONSIDERATIONS. Convinced of Mary's influence over the Heart of Jesus, the Apostles did not merely receive inspiration from the indescribable fervour of her devotion in prayer, but they implored her to supplement their own insufficiency, and to present their humble supplications to her Divine Son : *All these were persevering with one mind in prayer with... Mary the Mother of Jesus* (2). Therefore it is the opinion of many of the Fathers that the outpouring of the gifts of the Holy Ghost took place sooner and more abundantly on account of the powerful intercession of Mary.

APPLICATIONS. Implore the intercession of the Blessed Virgin on your behalf also. Beg her to

(1) *Acts*, i. 14. — (2) *Ibid.*

assist your feeble efforts ; to be with you in the midst of your family, and to present your united desires to her Divine Son. Ask her to obtain for you the grace never to forfeit any of the special favours which our Lord in His goodness bestows to the anniversary of the coming of the Holy Ghost.

COLLOQUY. Repeat this beautiful invocation : *Pray for us, O holy Mother of God, as thou didst pray for the Apostles, that we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ*, those magnificent promises made to those who prepare themselves in a worthy manner to receive the gifts of the Holy Ghost

SUNDAY.

Third day of the Novena.

ON THE GOSPEL FOR THE DAY.

THE TESTIMONY GIVEN OF JESUS
BY THE HOLY GHOST AND BY THE APOSTLES.

I. *Prelude.* Hear Jesus saying to the Apostles : *When the Paraclete cometh, whom I will send you from the Father, the Spirit of truth... He shall give testimony of Me* (1).

II. *Prelude.* Ask for unbounded confidence in the mysterious operations of the Holy Ghost.

POINT I. — THE WAY IN WHICH THE HOLY GHOST HAS BORNE
TESTIMONY TO JESUS CHRIST.

CONSIDERATIONS. The Holy Ghost has borne a magnificent testimony to Jesus Christ. He has proved to the world by means of the Apostles that He is the Son of God, the Saviour of all

(1) John, xv, 26

men, the Judge of the living and the dead. He has confounded the pride of the wise ones of the world; He has persuaded them to adore a crucified God, and to crucify their own flesh with all its desires. He has made the cause of Jesus to triumph over the conspiracies of the powerful ones of the earth who opposed the announcement of His Gospel; He has filled women and children with such courage that it has enabled them to despise death, and endure the most terrible sufferings for the love of Jesus.

APPLICATIONS. Jesus had foretold all these wonders of the testimony or operations of the Holy Ghost who should guide the Church after His Ascension. He had solemnly promised His Apostles that He would send Him; nevertheless, He wished them to ask for Him, and to prepare themselves to receive Him by continual and fervent prayer. It is on the same conditions that we can hope to receive Him, to see our weakness changed into strength, and our labour for souls responding to our desires, and made fruitful by His creative breath. Experience must have taught us that without the co-operation of the sanctifying Spirit, our efforts and good works are in vain, or only appear to produce fruit. Hence arose the practice introduced from time immemorial in the Church, and in general use among the faithful, of invoking the Holy Ghost before every important undertaking, and even before the principal actions of the day. With what amount of devotion, and with what amount of conviction of your insufficiency, do you repeat this invocation?

AFFECTIONS. Acts of faith on the truths I have been considering, and of humility at the thought of the many imperfections which creep into my prayers and into all my actions.

RESOLUTIONS. I will try to say the prayers I use before my principal actions, with more than customary devotion.

POINT II. — THE WAY IN WHICH THE APOSTLES
BORE TESTIMONY TO JESUS CHRIST.

CONSIDERATIONS. Jesus had said : *The Paraclete... shall give testimony of me*, and He added : *And you shall give testimony* (1) *in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the uttermost part of the earth* (2). We know how the Apostles fulfilled this noble and sublime mission. They made their Divine Master known and loved in all the world, in spite of the opposition of men and demons. They destroyed the idols and overturned the temples of the false gods. They changed the face of the world; they made it Christian by raising on the ruins of Paganism, the Church of Christ which has remained indestructible for centuries.

APPLICATIONS. Consider how twelve poor fishermen, ignorant and weak men worked these miracles. Why did the Son of God choose such weak instruments to lay the foundation of His Church? First, — to prove clearly that it was not a human but a Divine institution to which all men owed submission and obedience; and secondly, that the knowledge of our weakness, our wretchedness and unworthiness, should never deter us from good works and even

(1) John, xv, 27. — (2) Acts, i, 8.

greater undertakings which have as their object the glory of God, and the solace and salvation of souls.

AFFECTIONS. Ask God to rouse your courage by enabling you to understand that you should never despair of anything when you are sustained by His Almighty power.

RESOLUTIONS. In times of pusillanimity and fear I will stimulate my courage by saying with the Apostle : *I can do all things in Him who strengtheneth me* (1).

POINT III. — THE WAY IN WHICH WE CAN BEAR TESTIMONY TO JESUS CHRIST.

CONSIDERATIONS. To bear testimony to Jesus Christ means to work for His glory, to endeavour by all possible means to make Him known, loved and served. Whoever acts in this way co-operates with the Holy Ghost and the Apostles in the most holy and noble cause ever given to man.

APPLICATIONS. Awaken in your heart an ardent desire to co-operate in the triumph of this noble cause. You can do it successfully without being a priest or missionary, by your prayers, by your good example, by your conversation, and more directly by favouring and supporting the good works which are so numerous in our day, with your influence, your co-operation and your liberality. Observe what is done by so many others of your sex and your position in life ; see in what way you can imitate and even do more than they, but it must always be by self-denial, by seeking only

(1) *Philipp.* iv. 13.

the glory of God and the good of souls. Do your actions leave nothing to be desired regarding these practical conclusions?

COLLOQUY. With the Holy Ghost.

MONDAY.

Fourth day of the Novena.

THE APOSTLES AND DISCIPLES

MODELS OF THE SPIRIT OF PRAYER.

I. *Prelude.* Contemplate the Apostles and disciples at prayer in the Cenacle.

II. *Prelude.* Ask for grace to pray well, after their example.

POINT I.—THE APOSTLES PRAY WITH FAITH AND REVERENCE.

CONSIDERATIONS. What was the main occupation of the Apostles and disciples gathered round the Mother of Jesus in the Cenacle? According to St. Luke, it was prayer. And how did they pray? With great faith, a vivid realisation of the Presence of God, and consequently with great exterior and interior recollection. Since His Ascension, Jesus had been invisible to their eyes. As man He was far from them; yet they firmly believed that He was in the midst of them as God, and that He saw and heard them. Therefore they observed great modesty and reverence in their actions, and the words which came from their lips, or rather from their hearts.

APPLICATIONS. These should be the principal characteristics of our prayers. They should be accompanied by lively faith, and an intense conviction that God sees and hears us, that He

reads our innermost thoughts, and that He sees the dispositions of our hearts and souls when we pray. Have I this faith? If so, my manner will always be reverent, and my mind watchful over the words from my heart or my lips. Reverence and attention are born spontaneously from the high esteem we bear the person we address. Therefore, if I pray without becoming respect and attention, it is owing to my want of faith. The conclusion is severe; what can I say of my prayers?

AFFECTIONS. To be ashamed that I have so often spoken of the Infinite Majesty of God with so little reverence and care. — Arouse myself to repentance. — Ask forgiveness.

RESOLUTIONS. Before mental or vocal prayer, I will ask myself : Before whom am I going to appear, and why ?

POINT II. — THEY PRAY WITH HUMILITY AND CONFIDENCE.

CONSIDERATIONS. The prayers of the Apostles and disciples were accompanied by deep humility and perfect confidence. This humility came to them from the memory of their past infidelities, from the consciousness of their own weakness, and the intimate conviction of their powerlessness to accomplish the sublime mission which had been entrusted to them; — that of preaching and propagating the Gospel through out the world. On the other hand, the more they realised their insufficiency, the more confidence they placed in the efficacy of prayer, recommended by their Lord as the infallible means of obtaining their desires.

APPLICATIONS. *The prayer of him that humbleth himself shall pierce the clouds,* says

Ecclesiasticus (1). Have not your prayers often failed for want of humility? And yet everything should continually inspire us with deep humility and wholesome fear : our past falls... our daily infidelities, and the uncertainty of our future. May these thoughts be ever in your mind, and you will always pray with the dispositions of *a contrite and humble heart* (2). This humility will increase your confidence and fervour, and render your prayers more pleasing to God.

AFFECTIONS. Let us say with the humble and pious King David : *Look thou upon me, and have mercy on me ; for I am alone and poor* (3).

RESOLUTIONS. Before all my prayers I will humble myself before God for my miseries and weakness. I shall often say, especially on entering a church, these beautiful words used by a pious ascetic : I am utterly unworthy, Lord, to appear before Thy Divine Majesty.

POINT III. — THEY PRAY WITH RESIGNATION
AND PERSEVERANCE.

CONSIDERATIONS. The Apostles prayed with perfect resignation, and with no anxiety regarding the time when it might please God to send them His Holy Spirit. They knew that this Divine Spirit would be bestowed in answer to their supplications, for this had been promised them ; but giving no thought to the day when they might enjoy the answer to their prayers, they resolved to persevere until it should please their Divine Lord to fulfil His promises. Their perseverance was rewarded, for on the tenth

(1) *Ecclesi.*, xxxv, 21. — (2) *Ps.*, l, 19. — (3) *Ibid.*, xxiv, 16.

day they received the fulness of the gifts of the Holy Ghost.

APPLICATIONS. Do you pray in this way? Do you not dictate conditions of time to God, at least implicitly? Because your prayer is not answered at once, you give up praying, and so you fail in resignation and perseverance. This perhaps is one of the chief reasons why your prayers remain unanswered. On whom should you lay the blame?

COLLOQUY. With the Apostles. — Ask them to obtain for you the grace to pray well : that they may unite with you during this important Novena, so that you may share abundantly in the outpouring of the gifts of the Holy Ghost.

TUESDAY.

Fifth day of the Novena.

THE APOSTLES

ELECT

ANOTHER IN THE PLACE OF THE TRAITOR JUDAS.

I. *Prelude.* Hear St. Peter speaking to those assembled in the Cenacle.

II. *Prelude.* Ask for the grace of constant fidelity to your vocation.

POINT I. — ST. PETER

PROPOSES NAMING A SUCCESSOR TO JUDAS.

CONSIDERATIONS. The Apostles did not neglect to fulfil their duties while they were preparing for the coming of the Holy Ghost by recollection and prayer. The apostasy of Judas had apparently disordered our Lord's plans, for He had chosen from among His disciples twelve Apostles to bear testimony throughout the

whole world to His Resurrection and His doctrine. But the malice of men cannot hinder the designs of God. St. Peter, the head of the Apostolic College, feeling inspired from on high, *rising up*, says St. Luke, *in the midst of the brethren*, said... *Men, brethren, the Scriptures must needs be fulfilled... wherefore of these men who have companied with us... one of these (in the place of Judas) must be made a witness with us* (1) of the resurrection of Jesus. *For it is written in the book of psalms : And his bishopric let another take* (2). They all acquiesced in St. Peter's proposal, and immediately felt that it was their duty to ascertain on whom the choice of God had fallen.

APPLICATIONS. From this consideration you should infer that your practices of devotion should never be allowed to interfere with your duties, and that on the other hand these duties, however distracting they may be, should never prevent you from paying God the tribute of prayer to which He has a right. Again, that it is very important for you not to frustrate the designs which God in His goodness has made in regard to you. Suppose that He has called you to do, or support some good work, and that you fail to answer His appeal, what will happen? Another will be substituted in your place, and will receive the reward which had been prepared in heaven for you.

AFFECTIONS. How much gratitude I owe Thee, my Divine Saviour, for Thy great love for me. But also, how attentive and faithful I should be to Thy Divine inspirations in order

(1) *Acts*, i, 15-22. — (2) *Ibid.*, 20.

to fulfil the designs of Thy loving Providence! Assist me to fulfil them faithfully.

RESOLUTIONS. Often to recall these words of St. John to the Bishop of Philadephia : *Hold fast that which thou hast, that no man take thy crown* (1). With this intention avoid small infidelities, so that you may not fall inadvertently into great ones, and thus risk losing all.

POINT II. — THE ASSEMBLED DISCIPLES PROPOSE BARSABAS AND MATTHIAS.

CONSIDERATIONS. The votes of the assembly being equally divided between *Joseph, called Barsabas, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias* (2), it was difficult to choose, whereby the cordial unity among the Apostles was endangered. In order to decide and put an end to the difference, they had recourse to prayer; and they sought for the Divine Will by casting lots. With unanimous voice they all said : *Thou, Lord, who knowest the hearts of all men, shew whether of these two thou hast chosen, ... and they gave them lots* (3).

APPLICATIONS. Sometimes you will feel doubtful and uncertain too, regarding the choice of a state of life, of a confessor, a person, or a society you desire to join, etc. What should you do in perplexities such as these? Follow the example of the Apostles and disciples. Pray and implore our Lord to make His Will known to you. — Have you always acted thus? Have you not many times mistaken your whims and desires for the Will of God? — and substituted your own will for His?

(1) *Apoc.*, iii, 11. — (2) *Acts*, i, 23. — (3) *Ibid.*, 24-26

AFFECTIONS. *Come, O Creator Spirit blest... Come with thy grace and heavenly aid... So shall we not, with thee for guide, turn from the path of life aside (1).*

RESOLUTIONS. In all my doubts, I will be on my guard against the inclinations of nature, and will follow the example given by the faithful who were united to the Apostles in the Cenacle.

POINT III. — THE DIVINE WILL IS MANIFESTED IN FAVOUR OF MATTHIAS.

CONSIDERATIONS. *The lot fell upon Matthias, and he was numbered with the eleven Apostles (2).* The Will of God having been made manifest, all discord immediately ceased in the assembly, and gave place to the most perfect harmony. They all submitted with respect to the one chosen by God as to one of the twelve Apostles of Jesus Christ. Moreover, we do not find that Matthias showed any sign of pride, nor Barsabas any vexation or jealousy.

APPLICATIONS. Recall the beautiful rule given by St. Augustine, so that you may put it into practice : — In doubtful and uncertain matters, allow each one their liberty of opinion and choice; but in matters decided by authority or election, let there be unanimity in thoughts and words amongst you. This is an excellent maxim for maintaining peace and charity. Always be true to it, gladly making an entire abnegation of self when necessary.

COLLOQUY. With the newly elected St. Matthias.

(1) Hymn. — (2) Acts, i, 26.

WEDNESDAY.

Sixth day of the Novena..

OUR EXTREME NEED

OF THE GIFTS OF THE HOLY GHOST.

I. *Prelude.* See the Apostles, weak and ignorant men, in hiding *for fear of the Jews* (1).

II. *Prelude.* Ask for the gifts of wisdom, understanding and counsel.

POINT I. — WHAT THE APOSTLES WERE,
AND WHAT WE ARE WITHOUT THE GIFT OF WISDOM.

CONSIDERATIONS. The first of the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost is wisdom, which according to its etymology consists in knowing how to appreciate and desire things according to their true value. — *Sapientia a sapere*. Had the Apostles been distinguished for this before they received the gift of wisdom? Did they esteem and seek the things of God, of their souls, and eternity more than the transient pleasures of this world? No; they were men with earthly and material ideas, occupied entirely with the care of their bodies and the desire to succeed in the world through their Master's favour. *There was also a strife amongst them, which of them should seem to be the greatest*, St. Luke tells us (2). They were careless besides in regard to prayer, and the holy vigils which Jesus urged upon them.

APPLICATIONS. That is what the Apostles were, and we all are by nature, without the

(1) John, xx, 19. — (2) Luke, xxii, 24.

gift of wisdom ; cold and indifferent in spiritual things, in practices of piety, humility, mortification and penance ; always with countless pretexts for curtailing or omitting them, while we are naturally full of eagerness and activity in regard to worldly things, and all that concerns our corporal welfare, and vain and futile things. Do you not recognise yourself by these characteristics ? Have the courage to question yourself, and to demand an answer.

AFFECTIONS. Come to me, Spirit of Wisdom ! Teach me to esteem and love spiritual things, and the blessings of heaven more than all the treasures of the world : to know and appreciate all that can draw me nearer to God, and to a life of perfection.

RESOLUTIONS. To renew this invocation several times during the day.

POINT II. — WHAT THE APOSTLES WERE AND WHAT WE ARE WITHOUT THE GIFT OF UNDERSTANDING.

CONSIDERATIONS. What were the Apostles before they received the gift of understanding, that is to say, before they had been illumined by supernatural light, which raises human understanding to comprehend Divine mysteries ? The Gospel tells us that they did not understand anything regarding the sublime mysteries of the kingdom of heaven which Our Lord explained to them. They always interpreted them in a material and rude sense so as to merit from Him this severe reproof : *Are you also yet without understanding* (1).

APPLICATIONS. That is what the Apostles

(1) *Matth.*, xv, 16.

were before they received the gift of understanding. We are the same unless the Holy Ghost illumines us; incapable of comprehending the things of God, and of contemplating His Infinite Perfections. These are manifested to us and many are within touch of our hands in this marvellous universe in which we live, and yet we do not see them. We are not lost in wonder, for we are like blind men before a beautiful picture. The Word of God is explained to us, or we read beautiful spiritual works, yet we remain as indifferent as though we lacked understanding.

AFFECTIONS. *Veni Sancte Spiritus, Et emitte cœlitus, Lucis tuæ radium* (1), without Thee I have eyes that see not, and an understanding which leaves me in darkness, but with Thee my darkness will be changed into light.

RESOLUTIONS. As in the preceding Point.

POINT III. — WHAT THE APOSTLES WERE,
AND WHAT WE ARE WITHOUT THE GIFT OF COUNSEL.

CONSIDERATIONS. What were the Apostles without the gift of counsel? Men inconstant in their ideas and their affections, and in all their conduct, tossed about by changing circumstances like men who do not know what course to follow; they were determined to follow Jesus in the path of the Evangelical counsels, but cherished vain and earthly hopes in the depths of their hearts; one day full of ardour and courage, the next cast down and sad.

APPLICATIONS. That is what we are also, and will always be without the gift of counsel; full

(1) Hymn of Pentecost.

of doubt, darkness and false judgments, which make us the sport of our imagination, of the snares and delusions of the devil, and of the innumerable vicissitudes of life; advancing and breaking off; willing and not willing; incessantly giving way to the impressions of the moment, inconstant in doing good, and unable to achieve any solid progress. Has not this many times caused you to grieve before God?

COLLOQUY. With the Holy Ghost, in accordance with the *affections* indicated in this meditation.

THURSDAY.

Seventh day of the Novena.

THE CONTINUATION OF THE PRECEDING SUBJECT.

I. *Prelude.* See the Apostles together in the Cenacle.

II. *Prelude.* Earnestly ask for the gifts of fortitude, knowledge, piety, and the fear of God.

POINT I. — WHAT WERE THE APOSTLES
AND WHAT ARE WE WITHOUT THE GIFT OF FORTITUDE?

CONSIDERATIONS. Before the Apostles were endued with power from on high, they were indeed men of good will, but weak, timid and cowardly in the extreme. All of them at the Last Supper had made the most vigorous protestations of fidelity to their Divine Master, and solemnly promised to follow Him to prison and to death. But what happened? The moment they saw Him at the mercy of the soldiers of the High priest they cowardly took flight.

APPLICATIONS. Is this not a true image of our

natural inconstancy and cowardice when we are left to ourselves? Great in our promises, our protestations, good resolutions, but weak, careless and inconstant in fulfilling them; abandoning our best resolutions almost immediately after we have made them; succumbing to the least temptations; always seeking and finding excuses for not observing some point in our rule of life, or in our duties; often incapable of making a generous effort even in trivial matters.

AFFECTIONS. Acknowledgment. — Shame. — Invocations. — Come to me, O Spirit of Fortitude; sustain me and I shall triumph over all the obstacles which have hitherto retarded my progress in the path of perfection.

RESOLUTIONS. To repeat this invocation frequently.

POINT II. — WHAT WERE THE APOSTLES,
AND WHAT ARE WE WITHOUT THE GIFT OF KNOWLEDGE?

CONSIDERATIONS. Our Divine Lord wished to convince the world that His religion was not the work of men. For this reason He chose for its propagation twelve Galileans who were poor and ignorant, uneducated, unintellectual and rough men, according to the world, whose whole care was to become perfect in the art or industry which was their means of livelihood. That is what the Apostles were, and would have always remained without the gift of knowledge which was communicated to them at Pentecost.

APPLICATIONS. If you have been more favoured in regard to education, and have had the opportunity of acquiring knowledge and of

excelling in all that gains merit in the eyes of the world; if in this respect you have made progress through your own efforts, acknowledge nevertheless, that you have advanced but little in the practical knowledge of holiness. Acknowledge that you have made fewer efforts to make progress in the science of the Saints and in pleasing God, than in acquiring human knowledge and in pleasing the world. Does this thought not give you cause for shame, does it not make you sigh for the gift of knowledge?

AFFECTIONS. Invocations to the Holy Ghost, the Author of all holiness, the indispensable and infallible Guide for all those who aspire to holiness.

RESOLUTIONS. I will endeavour to make progress in the science of holiness with more earnestness and perseverance. To-day I shall redouble my entreaties to Him who alone can make my efforts successful.

POINT III. — WHAT WERE THE APOSTLES, AND WHAT ARE WE WITHOUT THE GIFTS OF PIETY AND THE FEAR OF THE LORD.

CONSIDERATIONS. Consider how imperfect was the affection of the Apostles for their Divine Master. It was not so much a pure sentiment of filial piety as a spirit of self-interest and egotism which moved them to love Him, and to attach themselves to Him. This accounts for their cowardice, and for the infidelity of which they were guilty towards Him; above all, in the days of His humiliations and His Passion.

APPLICATIONS. Have we nothing of this kind with which to reproach ourselves? Is it quite

true that we love God for Himself, and not for our own advantage. When we refrain from offending Him, is it not principally in order to avoid the punishment reserved for sin, the torments of hell or the sufferings of purgatory? And when we undertake supererogatory acts of virtue, is it not principally with the thought of the reward promised us? These dispositions of the soul are certainly neither sinful nor reprehensible, but how far removed they are from that noble piety and filial fear, and from that perfect charity infused into the hearts of the Apostles by the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost!

COLLÓQUY. With the Holy Ghost. — Humbly ask Him for the grace to become one of those children of God who are truly worthy of that name, who love God, their heavenly Father for His own sake as their Sovereign Good, and who fear sin because they fear above all things to displease their beloved Father.

FRIDAY.

Eighth day of the Novena.

ON THE CHIEF PURPOSE

OF THE DESCENT OF THE HOLY GHOST.

I. *Prelude.* Hear Jesus saying to His Apostles: *If I go not the Paraclete will not come to you* (1).

II. *Prelude.* Ask for grace to attain the purposes intended by the Son of God when He sent the Holy Ghost to His Apostles.

(1) John, xvi, 7.

POINT I. — THE HOLY GHOST
WAS TO CONSOLE THE APOSTLES

CONSIDERATIONS. In order to persevere in your fervour until the end of the Novena, think of the great ends for which our Divine Lord promised to send the Holy Ghost to His Apostles and disciples. It was in the first place, so that He might be with them after His Ascension, in the third Person of the Holy Trinity, to comfort and encourage them in the trials of life, and especially in the difficult labours of the apostolate : *Yet a little while* : He says to them, *and the world seeth me no more* (1) but... *I will not leave you orphans* (2). *I will ask the Father, and he shall give you another Paraclete, that he may abide with you for ever* (3). His promise was fulfilled. From the first days of their apostolate, the Apostles were beaten and cast into prison ; but instead of being afflicted or discouraged, *they indeed went from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were accounted worthy to suffer reproach for the name of Jesus* (4). The Holy Ghost worked the same miracle for the early Christians, though they were subjected to the severest persecutions by their countrymen ; *the Church, says St. Luke... was filled with the consolation of the Holy Ghost* (5).

APPLICATIONS. You too, in the course of your life, will meet with many trials in fulfilling your duties and in your good works ; but if the Holy Ghost is within you, you will bear them

(1) John, xiv, 19. — (2) Id., 18. — (3) Id., 16. —
(4) Acts, v, 41. — (5) *Ibid.*, ix, 31

not only with patience and resignation, but with joy; crosses and sufferings will be changed into joy. How much therefore you should do in order that you may receive and keep this Spirit of Consolation within you!

AFFECTIONS. *Come, Holy Spirit; Thou of all consolers best... solace in the midst of woe. « Veni, Sancte Spiritus, — consolator optime, — in fletu solatium »* (1).

RESOLUTIONS. In times of trial and desolation, I will repeat this invocation.

POINT II. — THE HOLY GHOST WAS TO GUIDE THE APOSTLES.

CONSIDERATIONS. The second purpose for which God sent the Holy Ghost to the Apostles, was to fill them with most intense light of faith, to teach them in a more definite way, the truths which Jesus had only partially revealed, and to unfold to them when necessary, the things that were to come. We know all this by these words which Jesus addressed to the Apostles on the eve of His death: *I have yet many things to say to you: but you cannot bear them now. But when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will teach you all truth... and the things that are to come He shall shew you* (2).

APPLICATIONS. What the Holy Ghost accomplished in the Apostles and early Christians, He does still, and He will never cease to do in all who try to draw Him to themselves and to keep Him. It is with this aim that on all important occasions, the Church begins by imploring the light and assistance of the Holy Ghost, and

(1) Hymn of Pentecost. — (2) John, xvi, 12-13.

that she urges the faithful to do the same, especially when through their position or their duty, they are entrusted with the guidance of others, or when in intricate matters, they are obliged to give a decision or advice. Many people who love to be guided in all things according to the will of God, are not content with invoking the Holy Ghost in matters of great importance, but do it frequently, and even several times a day when in any doubt and difficulty. Do you imitate them in this?

AFFECTIONS. Give thanks to the Holy Ghost for having so often enlightened, guided and protected you in critical and unavoidable circumstances. Ask for a continuance of His Divine assistance.

RESOLUTIONS. I will be on my guard against the danger to which even good people are exposed, of saying certain customary prayers inattentively and without devotion, as a matter of routine.

POINT III. — THE HOLY GHOST WAS TO GIVE HIS HOLY UNCTION TO THE WORDS OF THE APOSTLES.

CONSIDERATIONS. The Apostles were to glorify Jesus Christ not only in themselves, but also in others by making them know and practise His Divine teaching, by inspiring them with a horror of sin and with a love of virtue, by making them true disciples of Jesus, by making them saints. The third purpose for the descent of the Holy Ghost was to enable them to fulfil the task which was so much beyond their power. *You shall receive the power of the Holy Ghost coming upon you, and you shall be witnesses unto me... in all Judea... and*

even to the uttermost part of the earth (1). I will give you a mouth and wisdom which all your adversaries shall not be able to resist and gainsay (2). For it is not you that speak, but the Spirit of your Father that speaketh in you (3).

COLLOQUY. With the Holy Ghost ; — in accordance with the affections and resolutions of the first two Points.

THE EVE OF PENTECOST.

Last day of the Novena.

DISPOSITIONS RELATING

TO THE DESCENT OF THE HOLY GHOST.

I. *Prelude.* Imagine the assembly at the Cenacle.

II. *Prelude.* Ask for grace to prepare yourself for to-morrow's great feast by recollection, by prayer, and by *having recourse to Mary.*

POINT I. — BY RECOLLECTION.

CONSIDERATIONS. We are nearing the end of our Novena, so let us renew our fervour on this day that we may obtain its fruits. Let us recall and put into practice with great ardour, three means which should be an immense help to make us realise our desires. The first is recollection, which produces peace of soul, and union with God. The Apostles sought it in retirement from the world, in the seclusion and solitude of the Cenacle.

APPLICATIONS. If it be impossible for you to spend this day in retirement and contemplation,

(1) *Acts*, i, 8. — (2) *Luke*, xxi, 15. — (3) *Matt.*, x, 20.

free from all extraneous anxieties; if the preparations for the feast must on the contrary bring additional work and more distractions, at least prepare a retreat, a kind of Cenacle, in the depths of your heart. Avoid as much as possible all causes of dissipation and watch carefully over your senses, keeping serene and calm, striving to resemble *a true inward Christian* who having once *perfectly entered into the secrets of the Lord... never poureth out himself wholly to outward things* (1).

AFFECTIONS. Earnestly ask the Holy Ghost to be your Master in teaching you to overcome the difficulty of uniting interior recollection with exterior distractions.

RESOLUTIONS. To maintain this recollection, prepare yourself for the time and place when you will be most exposed to give way to distractions.

POINT II. — BY PRAYER.

CONSIDERATIONS. Prayer is the second means recommended from the first day of the Novena as indispensable for obtaining a large share in the outpouring of the gifts of the Holy Ghost. It would have seemed natural had the Apostles omitted it, since they had received from Jesus Christ Himself the assurance that they would receive the Holy Ghost with all His gifts; yet they never ceased to pray for Him. This they did because they were convinced that the gifts of God, although bestowed liberally, nevertheless should also be the fruit of prayer, of persevering prayer. That it may be more

(1) *Imitation*, Book II, Chap. 1.

efficacious, we must add self-denial to it. The Church reminds us of this obligation by prescribing a fast.

APPLICATIONS. Go over in your mind the days of the Novena which have already passed, and see if you have not been somewhat lukewarm in your prayers. If this has been the case, try to-day to repair your negligences by increased fervour. Do not say that the additional occupations of this day will prevent you from praying much : Truth says, *Let nothing hinder thee from praying always* (1). We do not pray with our hands but with our hearts ; therefore let your exterior actions be accompanied by continual and fervent aspirations, and they will be converted into prayers. You will pray all day without interruption.

AFFECTIONS. *Come, O, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of thy faithful : and kindle in them the fire of Thy love.*

RESOLUTIONS. To repeat this or a similar devout aspiration frequently to-day.

POINT III. — BY HAVING RECOURSE TO MARY.

CONSIDERATIONS. This is the third means which should give a great efficacy to the two preceding ones. No doubt you have not neglected it during this Novena, but on this day in particular we should have recourse to it as it is the last day of the Novena. This means is the intercession of Our Lady, through whom the Apostles and disciples obtained a superabundance of heavenly gifts, and by whom, St. Bernard tells us, God desires us to obtain

(1) *Eccle.*, XVIII, 22.

all things. *Totum nos Deus voluit habere per Mariam* (1).

APPLICATIONS. Keep your eyes constantly fixed therefore on your loving and powerful Mother to-day. Ask her with increased fervour and confidence to unite her prayers with yours as she united them on this day, to the prayers of the Apostles and disciples in the Cenacle, and to obtain for you as she obtained for them, a large share in the gifts of the Holy Ghost. You will do well to add the name of Mary to all your ejaculatory prayers; you will do it the more readily as it is Saturday, the day on which she is specially invoked.

COLLOQUY. With the Blessed Virgin.

THE FEAST OF PENTECOST.

I. *Prelude.* Imagine the Cenacle at the solemn moment of the descent of the Holy Ghost.

II. *Prelude.* Ask for grace to understand the three reasons for the great feast on this day — the descent of the Holy Ghost, — the promulgation of the Gospel, — the foundation of the Church.

POINT I. — THE DESCENT OF THE HOLY GHOST ON THE APOSTLES AND DISCIPLES.

CONSIDERATIONS. Ten days after His Ascension, and fifty days after Easter, Jesus fulfilled the promise He had so often made to His Apostles, by sending them His holy Spirit : *When the days of the Pentecost were accomplished, says St. Luke, they were all together in one place ; and suddenly there came a sound from heaven,*

(1) Sermon on the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin.

as of a mighty wind coming, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. And there appeared to them parted tongues as it were of fire, and it sat upon every one of them : And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they began to speak with divers tongues, according as the Holy Ghost gave them to speak (1). It is in these simple and explicit words that the Evangelist records the great and mysterious event of the Christian Pentecost which replaced the Pentecost of the Jews; an event which, in one moment, converted the Apostles, who until then had been carnal and ignorant, into spiritual and eloquent men, eminent in wisdom and holiness, and endowed with invincible zeal and strength of soul, capable henceforward of fulfilling the sublime mission they had received of reforming mankind, and changing the face of the earth.

APPLICATIONS. To-day we commemorate the anniversary of that great and glorious event in the sense that not only do we revive the memory of it, as we revive the memory of our Lord's Resurrection at Easter, but in the sense that we hope to see it reproduced in ourselves. In this respect, Pentecost differs essentially from other great feasts. At those we give thanks to God for past mysteries which no longer continue except in their effects; but at that of Pentecost on the contrary, we solemnise a mystery which is continually renewed in the Church, and which will be renewed in the souls of the faithful until the end of time. To-day, too, we are authorised, in virtue of the pro-

(1) *Acts*, ii, 1-4.

mise of Jesus Christ, to ask and hope for the descent of the Holy Ghost and the communication of His gifts with the same confidence as the Apostles. Amongst all the Christians who have prepared themselves by a Novena, there will be a great many who will receive this favour, though not in a perceptible manner, for that has been no longer necessary since the Faith became established. Is it possible for us to be of this number?

AFFECTIONS. Faith in the promises of Jesus Christ. — Hope. — Fervent invocations. — *Come, O Creator Spirit blest, and in our souls take up Thy rest; fill my heart with Thy gifts, with the fire of Thy love, and with the zeal for souls.*

RESOLUTIONS. I will often renew these affections and invocations during the day.

POINT II.— THE PROMULGATION OF THE GOSPEL.

CONSIDERATIONS. The second event, the anniversary of which is celebrated to-day is the promulgation of the Gospel. Beginning at Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost with wonderful success by the conversion and baptism of three thousand Jews, it extended rapidly over the world by means of the inspired voice of the Apostles. Even during their life time Jesus had His faithful adorers amongst all nations. The prophecy was fulfilled : *I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh* (1). *Thou shalt renew the face of the earth* (2).

APPLICATIONS. By an uninterrupted succession of Sovereign Pontiffs, Bishops and priests,

(1) *Joel*, ii, 28. — (2) *Ps.* ciii, 30.

successors of St. Peter, of the Apostles and of the seventy-two disciples, the Gospel with all its temporal and spiritual advantages has reached us. This day we commemorate this supreme blessing, and render solemn thanksgivings for it to God. Do not fail in this duty. But this is not sufficient for you who have opportunities for practising a holy apostolate in your own family, or outside your home by taking part in good works. You should renew your zeal to the utmost on this day, and ask yourself if by word, example or prayer, by all the means in your power, you have contributed as much as possible to extend the Kingdom of God by gaining souls for Him. See in what way your zeal has diminished; and how you can make it more effective.

AFFECTIONS and RESOLUTIONS. As in the preceding Point.

POINT III. — THE FOUNDATION OF THE CHURCH.

CONSIDERATIONS. The nations who were converted by the preaching of the Apostles, although differing so vastly in character and disposition, yet formed but one family, all having the same faith, the same laws, the same Sacraments, and the same Head. This immense family scattered over all parts of the world is the Church of Christ, One, Holy, and Catholic. This day reminds us of its glorious foundation: it is the third reason for the solemnisation of this feast.

APPLICATIONS. You have either had the happiness of being born of parents who glory in being children of God's Church, or you have become one of her children by the grace of

baptism later. Rejoice for this supreme favour, and renew your efforts to prove yourself worthy of it by a holy life.

COLLOQUY. With the Holy Ghost.

MONDAY.

THE MYSTERIOUS CIRCUMSTANCES OF PENTECOST.

- I. *Prelude.* See the Apostles inflamed with Divine love.
II. *Prelude.* Ask for the most tender filial piety towards Jesus Christ and His Holy Church.

POINT I. — THE CIRCUMSTANCE OF TIME.

CONSIDERATIONS. The great event of the Christian Pentecost took place on a Sunday, the fiftieth day after the Sunday of the Resurrection. It took place on the day following the Great Sabbath or Jewish Pasch; therefore it is evident that the descent of the Holy Ghost did not coincide in any way with the Jewish Pentecost, but with the day that followed. This circumstance designed by Divine Providence inaugurated a great and consoling mystery, namely, the succession of the New Law to the Old, a succession or substitution which is altogether in our favour. The Old Law, adapted to the obduracy of the Jewish people, was a law of fear and bondage given with the sound of thunder, and graven on stone; the New Law on the contrary, is a law of love and liberty, which the Holy Ghost Himself has engraved with wonderful gentleness on the hearts of the faithful, by communicating to them the interior

spirit of charity and the most tender filial piety.

APPLICATIONS. Do you give thanks to God often enough for being under the law of grace, and for being initiated therein by baptism? Do not limit yourself to expressing your gratitude by words, but try to strengthen and perfect in yourself ever more and more the interior law of charity. Three things are implied in it : first, that we should act with confidence towards God, as children with the best of Fathers, and not as slaves or servants with a hard and exacting master ; secondly, that the principle guiding all our actions, should be love and not fear ; thirdly, that we should serve the Lord our God for Himself, and not for the rewards He has promised us. — What are your dispositions with respect to this interior law of charity ? Are you steadfast in this spirit of love ? What progress have you made ?

AFFECTIONS. Ask for grace to understand and appreciate these words written by St. Paul to the Romans : *You have not received the spirit of bondage again in fear : but you have received the spirit of adoption of sons, whereby we cry : Abba (Father) (1).*

RESOLUTIONS. To repeat frequently this devout aspiration of St. Francis Xavier : *My God, I love Thee not because I hope for heaven thereby ; nor because they, who love thee not, must burn eternally... I love thee, and will love thee solely because thou art my God, and my eternal King.*

(1) *Rom.*, VIII, 15.

POINT II. — THE CIRCUMSTANCE OF PLACE.

CONSIDERATIONS. On the day of Pentecost the Apostles, presided over by St. Peter, and many other disciples who had remained faithful to our Lord, were gathered together with Mary the Mother of Jesus, in the upper room, or the Cenacle of the house which had been already sanctified by the mysteries of the Last Supper. This was the place, the dwelling chosen by the Holy Ghost for communication with men, and which He filled throughout with His Divine breath, without distributing it elsewhere. Interpreters say this house represents the Holy Church, or the union of the faithful professing the true doctrine of Jesus Christ, under obedience to the successors of St. Peter. There alone is the Holy Ghost given and poured out in the Sacraments, the true sources of eternal salvation. Out of the Church there is no salvation.

APPLICATIONS. What a privilege to have the Church for our Mother! She has begotten us for eternal life; she overwhelms us every day with new favours. What can we do for her in return? Love her and honour her by the purity of our lives; earnestly ask God to make her victorious over her enemies, and to give her all the nations of the earth as her heritage, in accordance with the promise of our Divine Redeemer: *There shall be one fold and one shepherd* (1). With this intention we should offer God all we have in the way of health, talents,

(1) John, x, 16.

knowledge and influence. What more can we do? In our relations and conversations with others, we can try to make the Church ever better known, esteemed and loved, and find new defenders for her. What more? Recommend and extend more and more the excellent work of the propagation of the faith. See what you have done in these various respects. — What you have left undone, and what you wish to do henceforth.

COLLOQUY. With Jesus our loving Saviour, Who by sending us the Holy Ghost, had filled us with gifts of grace. — Lay at His feet our declarations of love and gratitude, our desires, offerings and resolutions. — Ask Him to bless them and make them fruitful.

TUESDAY.

THE SYMBOLS EMPLOYED BY THE HOLY GHOST

IN THE MYSTERY OF PENTECOST.

I. *Prelude.* See the tongues of fire which descended on the heads of the Apostles and disciples.

II. *Prelude.* Ask for grace to penetrate the mysteries hidden under the symbols of a mighty wind and tongues of fire.

POINT I. — THE SYMBOL OF THE WIND.

CONSIDERATIONS. *When the days of the Pentecost were accomplished... suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a mighty wind coming* (1). By this sound, this whirl-

(1) Acts, II, 1-2.

wind which was directed to the Cenacle and was arrested there, the Holy Ghost desired to call the attention of the Apostles to His coming, and to attract the people to them, so that they might have the opportunity of promulgating the Gospel, and of laying the foundation of the Church of Christ, substituting it for the synagogue on that very day by baptising a great number of converted Jews. Moreover, this symbol of a *mighty wind* was singularly appropriate for the coming of the Holy Ghost to the Apostles, for it indicated the holy impetuosity and the vehement zeal with which they were going to spread the Evangelical doctrines throughout the world, overcoming all the obstacles they encountered.

APPLICATIONS. Ask the Holy Spirit to breathe His inspiration into your soul to rouse it and detach it wholly from all earthly affections, raising them gradually to heaven; to fill all the powers of your soul, as *it filled the whole house where... the Apostles were sitting* (1). To-day you can hope more than ever to obtain these special favours; but nevertheless, do not be discouraged, if you do not immediately feel the effect of your prayers; remember that *the Spirit breatheth where He will* (2), and when He will. He will come as it is said suddenly, at a time when you least expect Him.

AFFECTIONS. O, breath of the Divine Spirit, raise me above earthly things that my life may correspond with my noble origin and sublime destiny.

RESOLUTIONS. I will endeavour to live always

(1) *Acts*, ii, 1-2. — (2) *John*, iii, 8.

and especially to-day, in such a way that I may merit the visits and inspirations of the Holy Ghost.

POINT II. — THE SYMBOL OF THE TONGUES.

CONSIDERATIONS. No sooner were the Apostles warned of the coming of the Holy Ghost, than *there appeared to them parted tongues as it were of fire, and it sat upon every one of them* (1). Why did God choose tongues as the symbol of the descent of the Holy Ghost on the Apostles? Because the Apostles were destined to preach the word of God to all nations; because this Divine Spirit alone could make them worthy to fulfil this glorious ministry, and their tongue was to be the means employed. This is the reason that the gift of tongues was bestowed on them at this solemn moment, as related in the Acts of the Apostles : *They were all filled with the Holy Ghost and they began to speak with divers tongues* (2).

APPLICATIONS. Your speech is not destined for such sublime work as that of the Apostles, nor for that of apostolic men or missionaries; but you should use it for the glory of God and the good of others whoever you may be, especially as by your social position, your fortune, your education or your knowledge, you exercise or can exercise great influence over those who are around you. Think well over this. The gift of speech which is implied by the gift of tongues, is one of the most beautiful gifts granted by the Creator to man. He will demand from you a strict account of the use, and above

(1) *Acts*, II, 3. — (2) *Ibid.*, 4.

all, of the misuse you have made of it. And how difficult it is to avoid misusing it! *If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man*, says the apostle St. James (1). You have sufficient matter here for reflection and self-examination.

AFFECTIONS. Ask forgiveness for the un-Christian use you may have made of your speech. Offer it to God so that it may be an instrument for His glory.

RESOLUTIONS. To renew the determination to introduce something edifying or useful in all your conversations.

POINT III. — THE SYMBOL OF FIRE.

CONSIDERATIONS. It is related that these tongues were *as it were of fire*. It is the nature of fire to illumine, warm, dilate, purify and consume. Therefore it is the symbol of the operations of the Holy Ghost in the Apostles and disciples who were gathered together in the Cenacle. He enlightened them with the most vivid light of faith; inflamed them with holy ardour of love for God and for souls; He so dilated their hearts that the infinity of God could alone fill them henceforth, and earth seemed a field too limited for their zeal; He purified them from the smallest stains and transformed them into Himself, so that they became one spirit with Him.

APPLICATIONS. Those are the effects which the Holy Ghost still produces, especially during the season of Pentecost, in those who have the happiness of receiving Him. You ask if this

(1) *James*, III, 2.

happiness can be yours? Why should it not be? The Novena you have made, added to the desire that the Holy Ghost may come to you, should inspire you with the utmost confidence. Ask and you will be heard.

COLLOQUY. With the Blessed Virgin. — Beg and implore her to obtain for you as she obtained for the Apostles and disciples, the gifts of the Holy Ghost in abundance, particularly those which are most necessary for you.

WEDNESDAY.

THE MIRACULOUS OPERATIONS OF THE HOLY GHOST

IN THE APOSTLES.

I. *Prelude.* See in the eyes of the Apostles the expression of Divine love with which they are filled.

II. *Prelude.* Ask that you may participate in the miraculous effects of the operations of the Holy Ghost in the Apostles and disciples.

POINT I. — THE ADMIRABLE CHANGE IN THE APOSTLES.

CONSIDERATIONS. The moment that *there appeared to them parted tongues as it were of fire, and it sat upon every one of them... they were all filled with the Holy Ghost* (1). And were immediately transformed into different men. From being ignorant, timid, proud, inconstant sinners, they suddenly became prodigies of knowledge, strength, humility, constancy and holiness, purified from all stains of sin, and confirmed in sanctifying grace. What

(1) *Acts*, II, 3-4.

Jesus Christ had not done during the space of three years, the Holy Ghost accomplished in an instant, with no effort on the part of the Apostles.

APPLICATIONS. The Holy Ghost still produces the same effects, although less noticeably, in Christians who are docile to His inspirations, above all, when they receive the Sacraments worthily. You receive them frequently, and yet you complain that you are still very ignorant in matters relating to God, and that you are so frail and inconstant in temptations, so constantly relapsing into the same faults and imperfections, and remaining more or less in the same state of spiritual lukewarmness. But whose fault is it? Are you not to blame through habitual negligence and coldness in receiving the Sacraments?

AFFECTIONS. Humble yourself before God. — Thank Him for the good inspirations which you have often received in spite of your coldness, especially in Holy Communion.

RESOLUTIONS. Always to prepare myself with care for receiving the Sacraments.

POINT II. — THE ADMIRABLE ZEAL OF THE APOSTLES.

CONSIDERATIONS. The first use the Apostles made of the gift of understanding and of tongues, was to proclaim the glory and majesty of God; to make Jesus, His Divine Son known and loved; to persuade their countrymen with burning words of zeal, to glorify God, and to embrace and practise His heavenly teachings. That is the language of the Holy Ghost, wholly opposed to the spirit of the world which urges us to speak of ourselves, to praise our own

works, to glory in them, and through them obtain praise from men.

APPLICATIONS. By what spirit are your words inspired? Is it the spirit of God or of the world? — Examine yourself. If in your conversations the name of God, His loving-kindness and His wonderful Providence spring often to your lips; if you seek to make the religion and the Church of Jesus Christ loved, and defend and excuse those who are calumniated or slandered, you speak the language of the Holy Ghost; it is a proof that He reigns in your heart; rejoice therefore. But if you cannot find this, if your conversation is full of vanity and self-love, you must conclude that the Holy Ghost is far from your heart, for it is out of the abundance of the heart that the mouth speaketh. Judge yourself according to these suggestions.

AFFECTIONS. Earnestly ask the Holy Ghost to reign in your heart; to direct and sanctify your speech.

RESOLUTIONS. To watch and to take advantage of opportunities for glorifying God, and for praising the beauties and blessings of religion.

POINT III. — THE ADMIRABLE CONSTANCY OF THE APOSTLES.

CONSIDERATIONS. The Apostles' zeal aroused every evil passion against them. Libertines ridiculed it; the Scribes calumniated it; the princes of the nation had them cast into prison and beaten, threatening them with death if they continued to preach the name of Jesus. But far from giving way to fear or discouragement, the Apostles only continued to proclaim the risen Christ with greater fervour, contenting

themselves with answering those who unjustly wished to prevent them thus : *If it be just in the sight of God to hear you rather than God, judge ye. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard* (1). *We ought to obey God rather than men* (2).

APPLICATIONS. If you generously obey the quickening breath of the Holy Ghost, the noble inspirations of zeal and charity, the effect will be the same with you as with the Apostles ; you will often be unjustly criticised, scoffed at, calumniated and persecuted. But do not allow anything to disconcert you. Neither the criticism nor the approval of the world should guide your conduct, but the law of God, your duties, and the care of your spiritual interest interpreted truly by the director of your conscience. Have you always followed these principles ? Be faithful to them and you will be protected from error, and will act with entire confidence. Your zeal will be discreet, constant, blessed by God, and rich in fruit for your own salvation and that of your neighbour.

COLLOQUY. With the Blessed Virgin, as in the preceding Point.

THURSDAY.

ST. PETER'S FIRST SERMONS.

I. *Prelude.* Imagine the Apostles before an immense throng of Jews eager to hear them.

II. *Prelude.* Ask for grace to receive great benefit from hearing the Word of God.

(1) *Acts*, iv, 19-20. — (2) *Ibid.*, v, 29.

POINT I. — ST. PETER'S AUDIENCE.

- CONSIDERATIONS. The rumour of the wonders enacted in the Cenacle spread immediately throughout the city, and brought together an immense crowd of inquiring people round the Apostles : *Now there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men* (faithful to their obligation of annually visiting the temple) *out of every nation under heaven*, says St. Luke (1). St. Peter took the opportunity of speaking to them ; his audience comprised men of all nations speaking different languages. It may be said that by speaking to them, the Prince of the Apostles was heard by the world, for these numerous strangers on returning to their homes would not fail to publish abroad the words of salvation proclaimed by the Apostle, and the surprising miracle accompanying them, namely : that *every man heard them speak in his own tongue* (2). It was in this way that the seed of the Gospel was sown throughout the world, even before the dispersion of the Apostles. Later, in their evangelical careers, they had but to fertilise it, and they saw fervent Christians rising up on every side.

APPLICATIONS. Admire the Divine Providence which always knows how to adapt the means to the end, and to the duty or mission given to men. The Apostles' mission was to proclaim the Gospel throughout the world, and thus found the Catholic or Universal Church. How were they able to fulfil it ? The wonderful concurrence of circumstances we have been consi-

(1) Acts, II, 5 — (2) *Ibid.*, 6.

dering supplies the answer. Let us then trust ourselves to this wonderful loving Providence. Let us rely on God's all-powerful intervention in all the events of our lives, in all the efforts and sacrifices which are demanded by our duty to aim at Christian perfection. He will make up for our insufficiency, even by miracles if necessary.

AFFECTIONS. Place yourself wholly and for ever in the hands of Divine Providence by acts of confidence and resignation.

RESOLUTIONS. When I am in any difficulty I will think of these words of Abraham : *God will provide* (1).

POINT II. — ST. PETER'S DISCOURSE.

CONSIDERATIONS. Consider the substance and form of this discourse. Its substance was simply a collection of texts from the Holy Scriptures, announcing the coming of the Holy Ghost and His marvellous effects, as well as the Life, Death and Resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth, the Messiah figured in the law, — the same Messiah whom the Jews addressed by the chief of the Apostles, had rejected and crucified as the most guilty of men. In its form we find a marvellous freedom and a candid strength of expression allied to rare prudence, for instead of addressing his deicide hearers at first with stern censure, which would have exasperated and repelled them, the Apostle calls and holds their attention to the prophecies. He shows them with masterly eloquence how they had been deceived through the false zeal of their

(1) *Gen.*, xxii, 8.

princes, and had in reality demanded the death of their Redeemer, the Author of life : *The author of life you killed* (1), he says. This was the best means of rousing them to repentance and self-condemnation, and this result was effectively accomplished.

APPLICATIONS. If you are obliged to reprimand or punish anyone, imitate the Apostles' conduct, which was inspired and guided by the Holy Ghost. Endeavour first of all to make the guilty person acknowledge his fault, and confess it, and make him realise its gravity. But refrain from all bitter and wounding words ; it is better to think that he has acted thoughtlessly, or under the influence of passion. You will win his heart. You will obtain all you desire. If you yourself must receive correction, see only in him who does it, a father performing his bounden duty, or a friend acting solely for your good. Do you always follow these wise rules ?

AFFECTIONS. Ask for the graces you require, that you may always act in accordance with those rules.

RESOLUTIONS To reflect before correcting any one. — To anticipate your own well-deserved corrections by being the first to accuse yourself, as it is written : *The just is first accuser of himself* (2).

POINT III. — ST. PETER'S SUCCESS.

CONSIDERATIONS. St. Peter's success was astounding : three thousand people opened their eyes to the truth, placed themselves under the

(1) *Acts*, iii, 15. — (2) *Prov.*, xviii, 17.

direction of the Apostles and were baptised, receiving simultaneously the gifts of the Holy Ghost. Their example was followed shortly after by five thousand more. Thus the Church was founded and organised, and even during the lifetime of the Apostles it had spread to the ends of the earth.

APPLICATIONS. Never despair of success in the good works you have undertaken, or in which you co-operate with a right intention. Nevertheless, be on your guard against founding hopes of success on your own efforts rather than on the assistance of the quickening Spirit.

COLLOQUY. With St. Peter the Apostle.

FRIDAY.

THE MIRACULOUS OPERATIONS

OF THE HOLY GHOST IN THE EARLY CHRISTIANS.

I. *Prelude.* Imagine the devout assemblage of the first Christians singing the praises of God with the Apostles.

II. *Prelude.* Implore the Holy Ghost to repeat in you the wonders of holiness He effected in the first disciples of the Divine Saviour.

POINT I. — THE MIRACULOUS DETACHMENT.

CONSIDERATIONS. The gifts of wisdom and understanding which were so plentifully communicated to the first Christians, entirely changed their thoughts and feelings regarding the benefits and honours of the world. The things they had formerly coveted were in their eyes no longer anything but vanity, deception and obstacles in acquiring eternal blessings. Therefore : *as many as were owners of lands or*

houses sold them, and brought the price... and laid it down before the feet of the Apostles. And distribution was made to every one according as he had need (1). And they had *all things common* (2). Free in this way from every attachment, and from worldly cares, their aspirations were for heaven alone. They enjoyed unalterable peace and joy, serving God with an untrammelled and undivided love.

APPLICATIONS. The Holy Ghost has taught you also the nothingness of all that is earthly and perishable; He has enabled you to understand that the foundation of Christian perfection consists in detachment from the benefits of the world, according to Our Lord's words: *Blessed are the poor in spirit*, that is to say, those who though possessing and appreciating their goods, yet have their hearts detached from them, and only consider themselves depositaries entrusted with the care of the poor and the maintenance of good works. *For theirs is the kingdom of heaven* (3) adds Jesus, — it will be granted as a reward for their liberality.

AFFECTIONS. Give thanks to the Holy Ghost for correcting your erroneous judgments regarding the false benefits and seductive honours of the world. Ask Him to assist you to detach your heart from them more and more so that all your aspirations may be for heaven where alone are to be found true and imperishable blessings.

RESOLUTIONS. I will withstand the delusive temptations of the world with the answer given by St. Stanislaus Kostka to his brother Paul's

(1) *Acts*, iv, 34-35. — (2) *Ibid.*, ii, 44. — (3) *Matt.*, v, 3.

treachery : I have been born for greater things than any the world can offer me.

POINT II. — THE MIRACULOUS CHARITY.

CONSIDERATIONS. A spectacle no less novel for the world than the spirit of poverty manifested by the first Christians was the spirit of charity and of union which reigned amongst them. Although differing in birth, manners and customs, they were all nevertheless so united in heart and mind that they appeared but to have *one heart and one soul*, says St. Luke (1), all speaking the same language, praying together, having their meals together, and sharing the same joys ; ever ready for self-abnegation, and eager to help one another. This spectacle, as attractive as it was new, made unbelievers reflect ; they became convinced of the Divinity of a religion which made such perfect and happy men. Every day new converts joined them to participate in their happiness.

APPLICATIONS. The works of God possess a fecundity which time cannot exhaust. The miraculous charity and fraternal unity which, to the astonishment of a selfish world, the Holy Ghost effected in the early Christians, still exists in our day, not only in religious communities, but also in truly Christian families where the love of parents for their children, and of children for their parents, of children amongst themselves, and of servants for their masters, flows from the same source — from the Divine love, and holds all the members of a family intimately united amongst themselves.

(1) *Acts*, iv, 32.

Of these families there can be said what St. Luke said of the early Christians, that through intimate charity they were but *one heart and one soul* (1). If you have the happiness of being a member of such a family, give thanks to God; but if on the contrary, there are lamentable disagreements amongst you, be a messenger of peace and endeavour to bring unity into your family. God will bless your efforts; He will number you amongst His chosen children, as it is written : *Blessed are the peace-makers : for they shall be called the children of God* (2).

AFFECTIONS. Ask for a continual increase of charity for yourself and for those who are dear to you.

RESOLUTIONS. I will try to see clearly where lie the imperfections in my charity, so that I may amend.

POINT III. — THE WONDER OF PIETY.

CONSIDERATIONS. *And they were persevering in the doctrine of the apostles, and in the communication of the breaking of bread, and in prayers* (3). What were the disciples before their conversion? Material and carnal men whose religion consisted in unprofitable external observances with no interior devotion, for Jesus had complained : *This people honoureth me with their lips : but their heart is far from me* (4). And these disciples became in a short time, interior, spiritual and contemplative men, full of the most tender piety. This was the third miraculous operation of the Holy

(1) *Acts*, iv, 32. — (2) *Matt.*, v, 9. — (3) *Acts*, ii, 42. —
(4) *Matt.*, xv, 8.

Ghost in the first Christians. What means did they take to preserve and increase it? St. Luke has told us that it was by their diligence in learning *the doctrine of the Apostles, and in the communication of the breaking of bread, and in prayers* (1).

APPLICATIONS. It is by these same means that you should preserve and strengthen your spiritual life and piety. How do you use these means?

COLLOQUY. With the Holy Ghost.

SATURDAY.

THE MARVELLOUS TRANSFORMATION

EFFECTED

BY THE HOLY GHOST ON HUMAN SOCIETY.

I. *Prelude*. Hear the prophet David saying : *Thou shalt send forth thy spirit, and they shall be created ; and thou shalt renew the face of the earth* (2).

II. *Prelude*. Ask for a large share in the outpouring of the gifts of the Holy Ghost.

POINT I. — CHARITABLE INSTITUTIONS.

CONSIDERATIONS. What was the state of society before the coming of the Holy Ghost? Idolatry reigned supreme with its sanguinary superstitions, and the tyranny or oppression of the weak by the strong; the most revolting vices were deified. The breath of the Holy Spirit dispersed these horrors, and substituted for them the reign of truth, justice and virtue. What had been above all the fate of the poor and unfortunate of all kinds? They had suf-

(1) *Acts*, II, 42. — (2) *Ps.* CIII, 30.

ferred the most utter abandonment, or rather contempt, for they were supposed to be cursed by the gods. Why do we not see the vestige of any refuge for suffering humanity amongst the ruins of pagan monuments, even amongst the most civilised? Because there had never been any real spirit of charity amongst them. It was necessary for the Holy Ghost to diffuse it in the heart of man, which had been until then so hard and egotistical. He did it with wondrous profusion, as St. Paul says to the Romans : *The charity of God is poured forth in our hearts, by the Holy Ghost who is given to us* (1). And this charity immediately worked wonders; it *renewed the face of the earth*. It covered the earth with hospitals and charitable institutions for the destitute, for children, for old age, and for all sufferings; everywhere it raised up benevolent societies and religious communities of men and women who have carried devotion for the unfortunate to the point of heroism, even to the sacrifice of their lives. The martyr to charity has won a place beside the martyr of faith.

APPLICATIONS. How much to be envied are those who, following in the footsteps of the Apostles, carry the benefits of Christian civilisation into heathen lands. How happy too are those who by their duties and love of God, dedicate themselves to the service of the unfortunate and the ignorant, or who by their liberality maintain them; and also those who devote themselves so unselfishly to them. Can it not be said of them that they are in life

(1) *Rom.*, v, 5.

numbered amongst the blessed, by those words of Jesus Christ : *Come, ye blessed of my Father;.... I was hungry and you gave me to eat.... Amen I say to you, as long as you did it to one of these my least brethren, you did it to me* (2). That you may be amongst these happy souls, see what you have neglected to do with respect to charity, or in what way you can surpass what you have already done.

AFFECTIONS. Thanksgiving to the Holy Ghost for the inestimable benefits of Christian civilisation, and the happiness resulting from it.

RESOLUTIONS. To dedicate myself to charitable work with renewed ardour, rousing myself if necessary, by keeping in mind those words of Jesus : *As long as you did it to one of these my least brethren, you did it to me.*

POINT II. — THE ABOLITION OF SLAVERY.

CONSIDERATIONS. Before the coming of the Holy Ghost, and the promulgation of the Gospel, more than half the human race was oppressed under the yoke of the most degrading slavery. In pagan Rome, the queen of civilisation, a single individual frequently owned several thousands of slaves. And what were these slaves in the eyes of their master? Beings who were more dispicable than beasts of burden, who were delivered up to death for the mere caprice or whim of the owner, or who were obliged to kill each other in the amphitheatres for the amusement of the people; who moreover were sacrificed in large numbers on

(1) Matt., xxv, 34-40.

the altars of national divinities, or rather devils. The voice of reason which had made itself heard through the protestations of some philosophers had been unsuccessful in denouncing these horrors. It was reserved to the Holy Ghost to put an end to them. Speaking by means of the Apostles He made the world understand that *There is no respect of persons with God* (1). *There is neither.... bond nor free : but Christ is all, and in all* (2). These principles which the Pontiffs in succession to the Apostles have unceasingly insisted on with all discretion and prudence, finally prevailed in the spirit of men, and brought the benefits of actual civilisation to the world.

APPLICATIONS. Let us grieve for the blindness and ingratitude of those who ignore the Author of all Good, and who attribute their benefits to the natural progress of the human mind. They do not see or do not want to see that this same human mind has produced no such results amongst people where the Voice of the Holy Ghost has not been heard. Let us pray for these unhappy people who are still oppressed by the yoke of the devil; and let us be careful ourselves never to submit to the shameful yoke of human respect, or of unruly passions.

COLLOQUY. With the Holy Ghost. Acknowledge and bless Him as the Author of all the benefits of Christian civilisation. — Ask forgiveness for having enjoyed these benefits without showing sufficient gratitude. — Beg Him to increase in us the spirit of charity, zeal and sacrifice.

(1) *Col.*, iii, 25. — (2) *Ibid.*, 11.

THE FEAST OF THE BLESSED TRINITY.

I. *Prelude.* Hear Jesus Christ saying : *Teach ye all nations : baptising them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost* (1).

II. *Prelude.* Ask for grace to know and feel deeply all the love and gratitude you owe to each one of the Three Persons of the most Blessed Trinity.

POINT I. — THE LOVE AND BLESSING OF GOD THE FATHER.

CONSIDERATIONS. This day's feast is the complement, and as it were the epitome of all the feasts which have succeeded each other since the beginning of the ecclesiastical year. It is the feast of the adorable mystery of the Most Blessed Trinity, one God in Three Persons. It is a mystery for ever impenetrable to our intelligence which is essentially limited, and incapable as such of comprehending the infinite. Let us adore Him with deep humility, but above all with the most lively gratitude. In order to arouse these affections in ourselves, let us call to mind the benefits we owe to the love of the Three Persons of the most Holy Trinity. *I believe in God the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth.* Omnipotence manifested by the work of creation is the special attribute of the Father because from Him proceed the two other Persons. Therefore, it is to Him that I owe the first blessing in the order of blessings, my existence, my preservation, and all that has contributed to my preservation. Without Him I should be nothing; I should always have remained nothing.

(1) Matt., xxviii, 19.

APPLICATIONS. From all eternity, God saw in the nothingness from which you came, millions of potential beings who would have served and glorified Him better than you; why then has He chosen you in preference to those millions of others? By a gratuitous predilection for you. *Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love, therefore have I drawn thee, taking pity on thee* (1). It is to this same love that you owe your preservation from so many perils when others have met a premature death; that you owe your continual enjoyment of so many exceptional favours in the order of nature and of grace. — Love asks some return. What great or heroic act have you done for a God so loving as this? — for a Father who is so bountiful with you? Perhaps you have only given Him very poor proofs of love. Have you not merely given Him lukewarm service?

AFFECTIONS. Adoration. — Shame. — Gratitude. — An offering of yourself. Vigorous declarations of love and devotion.

RESOLUTIONS. To keep these affections during the day.

POINT II. — THE LOVE AND BLESSINGS OF GOD THE SON.

CONSIDERATIONS. The love of God the Son has been manifested to us by a yet more wonderful blessing than that of creation, namely, by the blessing of redemption, in virtue of which we have been redeemed not only from bondage and death, but reinstated in all our original rights. What admiration would be aroused throughout the world if a king's son took the place of a

(1) *Jeremias*, xxxi. 3.

guilty slave, and delivered himself up to death for him?

APPLICATIONS. That is what the eternal Son of God has done for us, for each one of us. *He debased himself*, says the Apostle, *taking in the Incarnation, the form of a servant... becoming obedient unto death* (1). What conclusion does the Apostle draw from this? That we should live for Him alone who dies for us. Here are his words : *And Christ died for all, that they also who live may not now live to themselves, but unto him who died for them* (2). Have you lived in this way? How have you proved your love and your gratitude.

AFFECTIONS and RESOLUTIONS. As in the first Point.

POINT III. — THE LOVE AND BLESSINGS OF THE HOLY GHOST.

CONSIDERATIONS. The love of the Holy Ghost has been specially revealed in the blessing of sanctification and Divine adoption. He sanctified us through baptism, by purifying our souls from every stain, by bestowing Divine charity, and with it all the prerogatives of sanctifying grace, which raise us to the dignity of adopted sons and heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ. This is the express doctrine of St Paul : *The charity of God is poured forth in our hearts by the Holy Ghost who is given to us* (3). *The Spirit himself giveth testimony to our spirit that we are the sons of God... heirs indeed of God and joint-heirs with Christ* (4). He has also sanctified us through Confirmation,

(1) *Philipp.*, II, 7-8. — (2) *II Corin.*, v, 15. — (3) *Rom.*, v, 5. — (4) *Ibid.*, VIII, 16-17.

and through participation in the other Sacraments; He has sanctified us again in attracting us by the unction of His grace to the exercise of Christian virtues and to the practice of good works.

APPLICATIONS. How many blessings I have received without any merit on my part, or rather, in spite of my unworthiness! *What shall I render to the Lord, to the Three Persons of the most Holy Trinity, for all the things that He hath rendered to me* (1).

COLLOQUY. With the Three Adorable Persons of the Most Holy Trinity. Adore Them, and thank Them separately for the blessings received from them.

MONDAY.

THE RELATIONS OF THE CHRISTIAN

WITH THE MOST HOLY TRINITY.

I. *Prelude.* See a fervent Christian devoutly making the Sign of the Cross.

II. *Prelude.* Ask for grace to understand our relations with the Three Persons of the most Holy Trinity.

POINT I. — OUR RELATIONS WITH GOD THE FATHER.

CONSIDERATIONS. What is a Christian? A man who has a special relationship with God the Father, whose son he becomes by baptism. What Jesus Christ is by nature, the Christian is by adoption. He receives in reasonable proportion by spiritual regeneration what the Word received in His eternal generation. *You have received the spirit of adoption of sons, whereby*

(1) Ps. cxv, 12.

we cry : Abba, (Father). And if sons, heirs also (1). How great would be the happiness of a poor man's child if he were adopted by a powerful king and invested with all the privileges of a rightful son? And yet that is but a faint image of the Divine adoption of the Christian by Holy Baptism.

APPLICATIONS. What is our duty towards a Father Who is so magnanimous and infinitely loving? Above all it is to love Him with our whole heart above all else, and to prove that love for Him by avoiding all that could displease Him, even the most trivial faults we commit deliberately; by seeking to please Him ever more and more by the practice of virtue; and by striving, with perseverance for the perfection of our state, according to these words of Jesus Christ : *Be you therefore perfect, as also your heavenly Father is perfect* (2). Have you given proof of truly filial love in this way? In what have you been remiss?

AFFECTIONS. Grieve before your heavenly Father for your coldness, or at least for the faint love you bear Him.

RESOLUTIONS. To endeavour seriously to multiply the proofs of love claimed from you by your heavenly Father.

POINT II. — OUR RELATIONS WITH GOD THE SON.

CONSIDERATIONS. What is a Christian? A man who is connected, or rather has a wonderful relationship, with God the Son made man for us. He is His brother by similarity of nature; and by baptism he becomes a member of His

(1) *Rom.*, viii, 15-17. — (2) *Matt.*, v, 48.

mystical Body. St. Paul says that all Christians are this by baptism : *Now you are the body of Christ, and members of members* (1). What a wondrous and intimate union! But this is not all, for by Holy Communion we are incorporated with Him, according to these words from the lips of Jesus Himself : *He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, abideth in me, and I in him* (2). Living through Him, and as it were, identified with Him, *that by these you may be made partakers of the divine nature* (3). It is impossible to imagine a closer and more glorious relationship.

APPLICATIONS. What should the Christian do who is penetrated by the thought of this very intimate relationship? St. John the Evangelist gives the answer in these few words : *He that saith he abideth in him, ought himself also to walk, even as he walked* (4), in such a way as to justify that beautiful saying of St. Cyprian : *The Christian is another Christ. « Christianus alter Christus. »*

AFFECTIONS. I shall ask for grace to understand all the truth and duty embraced in these few words : The Christian is another Christ.

RESOLUTIONS. I will rouse myself to be generous in the service of God by thinking of the efforts and heroic sacrifices made by so many of the faithful who are less acquainted, and not so well provided as myself with gifts of grace.

POINT III. — OUR RELATIONS WITH GOD THE HOLY GHOST.

CONSIDERATIONS. What is a Christian? A man

(1) I *Corin.*, xii. 27. — (2) *John*, vi. 57. — (3) II *Peter*, i. 4.
— (4) I *John*, ii. 6.

who acquires through the Sacrament of Baptism, a special relationship with the Holy Ghost whose living temple he becomes; a truth attested by the faith which the Apostle in more than one of his Epistles calls to the minds of the early Christians : *Know you not*, he writes to the Corinthians, *that your members are the temple of the Holy Ghost who is in you* (1)? Therefore, it is worthy of notice that the same ceremonies are used in the administration of Holy Baptism as in the consecration of our churches.

APPLICATIONS. The Apostle himself draws practical conclusions from the truth you have been considering. Immediately after saying : *Your members are the temple of the Holy Ghost*, he adds : *Glorify and bear God in your body* (2), that is to say, make your body an instrument for the glory of God; keep it pure from all stain; adorn it with the lustre of virtue and good works, just as the sanctuary is tended and adorned. Do you do this?

COLLOQUY. With the Three Persons of the Holy Trinity.

TUESDAY.

THE BLESSINGS OF THE MOST HOLY TRINITY

RECALLED AND MEDITATED
UPON IN THE SIGN OF THE CROSS.

I. *Prelude.* See Jesus Christ nailed to the cross.

II. *Prelude.* Ask for grace to pay the highest possible honour to the most Holy Trinity on making the Sign of the Cross.

(1) 1 Corin., vi, 19. — (2) *Ibid.*, 20.

POINT I. — IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER

CONSIDERATIONS: When you say those words in making the Sign of the Cross, and this thought : Who has created me in His image for heaven. What holy and salutary reflections accompany these thoughts! They provide material for an entire meditation. Who has created me, drawn me out of nothingness by His almighty power, and yet more through His special love, in preference to so many others who would have served Him more worthily. In His image : how precious and beautiful then must my soul be in the sight of the angels! It is a living likeness of God ; it reminds us always and everywhere that we are all children of the Most High. What care I should take of it! For heaven, to be happy there for ever, body and soul, crowned with glory and unspeakable joy.

APPLICATIONS. Those are some of the reflections which will occur to you when you say the first word which accompaniss the sign of the Cross and when you add these words : Who has created me in His image for heaven. And those reflections on the other hand, will arouse holy and devout affections in your heart which will preserve your fervour. Try it.

AFFECTIONS. *Our Father, Who art in heaven, hallowed by Thy name*, in my soul and heart by an ever increasing filial respect and love.

RESOLUTIONS. I will try to practise the devotion recommended in the consideration of this first Point.

POINT II. — AND OF THE SON.

CONSIDERATIONS. To these words add in your mind : Who has redeemed me by His Blood,

with so much love! the most pure and disinterested love ever known, since He had nothing to gain by redeeming me, being Himself essentially Infinite Beatitude.

APPLICATIONS. These thoughts should guide you to draw the most salutary practical conclusions. They will tell you that being redeemed by the Son of God, you no longer belong to yourself but to Him; that you should live for Him, and try to glorify Him in yourself by holiness of life, and in others by the fervour of your zeal. They will tell you that you should have unbounded confidence in God; that after delivering up His own Son to death for you, He cannot refuse any of your reasonable petitions. This observation is made by St. Paul : *He that spared not even His own Son, but delivered him up for us all how hath he not also, with him, given us all things* (1)?

AFFECTIONS. Ask God to remind you of these thoughts and practical conclusions whenever you make the Sign of the Cross.

RESOLUTIONS. To persevere in your efforts to obtain this result.

POINT III. — AND OF THE HOLY GHOST.

CONSIDERATIONS. Again, to these words and the following! Who has sanctified and adopted me as a Son of God. Sanctified me by the mysterious effects of the Sacraments, especially those of Baptism and Confirmation; sanctified me by His Divine inspirations, by the unction of His grace, and above all by the grace of my vocation to Christianity, of which He is the

(1) *Rom.*, VIII, 32.

Author and Promotor, and adopted me as a Son of God, adopted in the fullest sense of the word, with all the privileges attached to real adoption.

APPLICATIONS. These thoughts will remind you of the solemn obligations contracted through your Baptism, Confirmation, and your Divine adoption. They will make you attentive and docile to the inspirations of the Holy Ghost, and will preserve in your heart the devotion and generosity which appertain to the sons of God. Therefore, there are many benefits contained in this method of making the Sign of the Cross : *In the name of the Father, Who has created me in His image for heaven, and of the Son, Who has redeemed me with His Blood with so much love, and of the Holy Ghost, Who has sanctified me and adopted me as a child of God...* I desire to commence and to end this day, this action, etc. Try this, and you will find that you will obtain very great profit from it. Try to make this practice a habit.

COLLOQUY. With the most Holy Trinity. Offer Him this resolution with a desire to be ever more and more pleasing to Him.

WEDNESDAY.

NOVENA

TO THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS.

I. *Prelude.* See Jesus showing His Heart and saying these words : *Behold this Heart which has loved men so much.*

II. *Prelude.* Ask for grace to commence this Novena well.

POINT I — THE OBJECT OF THE DEVOTION
TO THE SACRED HEART

CONSIDERATIONS. The material or sensible object of this devotion is the Heart of the Incarnate Word, inseparably united to His Humanity and to His Divinity, and as supremely adorable as Jesus Christ Himself, with Whom it is identified. The spiritual or abstract object is the love of Jesus, of which the Heart is the symbol. Therefore, in whatever way we consider, it, the object of this devotion is sublime, holy and excellent. It is the Heart of a God Who loves us most tenderly. It is Jesus Christ Himself, contemplated in the most noble organ of His humanity, and in the most sublime attribute of His Divinity — His love!

APPLICATIONS. We consider ourselves favoured if we possess, or merely if we press to our lips a relic of the true Cross, one of the nails, or one of the thorns which pierced the Hands or Head of Jesus. These objects are indeed worthy of our veneration, but what are they in comparison with the Heart of Jesus? May our devotion therefore, in making this Novena, be not unworthy of such a great and holy object! May it help us to increase our veneration and love for the Sacred Heart.

AFFECTIONS. *O Sweet and adorable Heart of Jesus, make me love Thee more and more (1).*

RESOLUTIONS. To repeat this pious aspiration several times on every day of the Novena. To place the picture of the Sacred Heart where you can see it, so that it may remind you, and kiss it from time to time.

(1) Prayer of the Confraternity of the Sacred Heart.

POINT II. — THE MOTIVES OF DEVOTION
TO THE SACRED HEART.

CONSIDERATIONS. Motives with respect to Jesus Christ. No devotion can be more acceptable to Him because it reminds us incessantly of what He has done and suffered for us. His Heart is similar to ours. We are pleased if services we have rendered, are remembered; He has the same desire. His words prove it, for on the eve of His death, when He gave His Apostles power to consecrate bread and the wine, He said to them : *As often as you shall eat this bread, and drink this chalice, you shall show the death of the Lord until he come* (1), the death which for love of you He is going to suffer, to deliver you from everlasting punishment, and to open for you the gate of heaven.

Another motive with respect to Jesus Christ is His desire that we should, by our adoration and love, make amends for the outrages committed against His Heart present on our altars — for the blasphemies of heretics or the wicked; for the indifference, coldness, or want of devotion shown by those who yet esteem it an honour to belong to Him. Motives in respect to ourselves. In devotion to the Sacred Heart we should find a most efficacious means, first, of maintaining an interior life; secondly, of paying the debt of gratitude claimed from us most justly by Our Divine Redeemer; thirdly, of preserving and increasing our fervour in His service; and lastly, of obtaining for ourselves, and for those entrusted to our care, an

(1) 1 *Corin.*, xi, 26.

abundance of graces, since the Sacred Heart is their inexhaustible source.

APPLICATIONS. These are many good reasons for us all to cultivate devotion to the Sacred Heart, and to promote it amongst others with care and perseverance. How have you done it? Must you not reproach yourself with unpardonable negligence? In order to arouse your fervour, frequently recall these words which Jesus Christ Himself addressed to St. Margaret Mary Alacoque (1) : *Behold the Heart which has so loved men, but in return receives nothing from the generality of mankind but dishonour and ingratitude*; and these other words : *I promise to pour out abundantly the riches of my Heart on all who honour It, and try to make it honoured.* (Life of St. Margaret Mary.)

AFFECTIONS. I shall ask my loving Saviour to inflame my heart with His Divine love.

RESOLUTIONS. I will earnestly seek to propagate devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

POINT III. — THE NOVENA OR THE PRACTICE OF DEVOTION TO THE SACRED HEART.

CONSIDERATIONS. The better we prepare ourselves for feast days, the more we may hope to obtain extraordinary graces and favours : God asks for our co-operation. Moreover, this preparation strengthens our faith and confidence, which were the first conditions demanded by Jesus from those for whom He was going

(1) A Religious of the Visitation who died in Autun, 1690. The Sovereign Pontiff Pius IX after having declared the heroism of her virtues on August 23rd 1846, beatified her on September 16th 1864. The Sovereign Pontiff Benedict XV canonized her on May 20th 1920. The feast is on October 25th.

to perform some miracle. This is the origin of Novenas, and in particular of the Novena of preparation for the feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

APPLICATIONS. In order that it may be entirely successful, decide at once what you wish to do each day. What prayers — what good works — and what mortifications.

COLLOQUY. With the loving Heart of Jesus.

THURSDAY.

CORPUS CHRISTI.

THE LOVE OF THE HEART OF JESUS

MANIFESTED

IN THE INSTITUTION OF THE HOLY EUCHARIST.

I. *Prelude.* Listen in spirit to these words of St. John the Evangelist : *Jesus... having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them unto the end* (1).

II. *Prelude.* Ask for grace to understand the wonders of love which the Heart of Jesus works for us in the holy Sacrament of the Eucharist.

POINT I. — JESUS IN THE EUCHARIST IS THE COMPANION OF OUR EXILE.

CONSIDERATIONS. The love of the Heart of Jesus solved a problem in our favour which is insoluble to human love : to die for those we love without being separated from them. How did He do it? By instituting the Holy Eucharist. By means of this ineffable Sacrament, Jesus Christ, though veiled from our eyes, resides truly, Body and Soul, amongst us. Becoming thus the Companion of our exile, He

(1) John. xiii, 1.

multiplies His Presence over all the world so that no one need be deprived of Him; and from the interior of the Tabernacle, as from a refuge of mercy, He addresses this loving invitation to men : *Come to me, all you that labour and are burdened, and I will refresh you* (1).

APPLICATIONS. Profit by the circumstance of the day, the Feast of the Blessed Sacrament, to pay a solemn tribute of gratitude, veneration and love to the most loving Heart of Jesus; to express your sorrow for having answered His tender invitations so indifferently, and for having too often grieved His Divine Heart by your coldness and infidelity.

AFFECTIONS. Keep these thoughts in mind for a considerable time.

RESOLUTIONS. To visit Jesus in the Sacrament of His love more often or at least with more love.

POINT II. — JESUS IN THE EUCHARIST
IS THE VICTIM PERPETUALLY IMMOLATED FOR US.

CONSIDERATIONS. The second wonder effected for us by the all-powerful love of our Divine Saviour is that by means of the institution of the Holy Eucharist, He renews continually in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, the immolation He made of Himself on Calvary on Good Friday. It is always He who is the Victim and Sacrificer, who offers Himself by the hands of the priest. The sole difference between the sacrifice of the Cross and that of our altars, is that the first was accomplished with the shedding of blood, and the other is not; Jesus only

(1) Matt., xi, 28.

being immolated now, according to the theological expression, by the sword of the words of Consecration, by virtue of which the Body of Our Lord is separated from His Blood, and would be separated in reality, if the risen Christ were not immortal. Therefore, St. John Chrysostom concludes that the Sacrifice of the Mass has the same value as the Sacrifice of the Cross.

APPLICATIONS. Endeavour to appreciate your advantages in being able to be present very often, if not daily, at this Holy Sacrifice, and thank God for them. But how do you assist? With what amount of faith, of reverence and devotion? Is there no lukewarmness on your part, a kind of routine, and much negligence in observing the acts of devotion which were formerly of great use to you?

AFFECTIONS. To-day when we celebrate the glorious memory of the institution of the Holy Sacrifice on our altars, admire and praise with joy the love shown you by the Heart of Jesus.

RESOLUTIONS. To assist your devotion during Holy Mass by making the acts of devotion suggested by your first fervour and which you may have gradually neglected or completely forgotten.

POINT III. — JESUS IN THE EUCHARIST
IS THE FOOD OF OUR SOULS.

CONSIDERATIONS. What crowns the love shown us by Jesus in the Holy Eucharist, is that therein He desired to be the Food of our souls, and to identify Himself with us in such a way that we live in Him, and He in us. Listen to His own words and meditate on them : *Take*

ge, and eat : This is my body (1). He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, abideth in me, and I in him (2).

APPLICATIONS. How is it that after having so frequently participated in the Blessed Eucharist, you are yet so imperfect and unspiritual, so unlike Jesus Christ? There must certainly have been something lacking on your part, in your dispositions, or perhaps lukewarmness either in your preparation, in receiving Communion or in your thanksgiving? See in what way you have failed; in what way you can and ought to do better.

COLLOQUY. With St. Margaret Mary. I shall ask her to obtain for me some sparks of the Divine love which inflamed her when Jesus appeared showing her His Heart, and speaking with her.

FRIDAY.

THE PURITY OF THE HEART OF JESUS.

I. *Prelude.* Hear Jesus saying these words : *Blessed are the clean of heart for they shall see God (3).*

II. *Prelude.* Ask for grace to keep your heart pure amidst the corruption of the world.

POINT I.

THE HEART OF JESUS IS FREE FROM ALL STAIN OF SIN.

CONSIDERATIONS. The Heart of Jesus formed from the blood of an Immaculate Virgin-Mother, is immaculate also, and ever remained free from any stain of sin. Our Lord even condescended to give His detractors the assurance and proof of this truth, when after saying that

(1) Matt., xxvi, 26. — (2) John, vi, 56. — (3) Matt., v, 8.

the things which proceed out of the mouth, come forth from the heart, and those things defile a man (1). He challenged them thus : *Which of you shall convince me of sin* (2)? It is true that they accused Him of sin on the day of His Passion,*but that was with such bad faith that Pilate himself was forced to declare His perfect innocence before the whole tribunal saying : *I find no cause in him* (3). Moreover, in virtue of the hypostatic union of His Humanity with His Divinity, Jesus Christ was impeccable : it was impossible for a breath of sin ever to sully the Divine purity of His Heart. What more exquisite beauty is there than the Heart of Jesus?

APPLICATIONS. Alas! how great in this respect, is the contrast between the Heart of Jesus and mine! His, ever pure and immaculate, and mine, stained with original sin from the first moment of its formation, and stained afterwards by so many other sins which have disfigured it in the eyes of my Creator. Sins of my youth and daily sins which, though not revolting in my eyes are stains none the less in the sight of Divine Justice, and must be effaced by penance or the flames of purgatory.

AFFECTIONS. *Create a clean heart in me, O God* (4). *Who can make him clean that is conceived of unclean seed? Is it not thou who only art* (5)?

RESOLUTIONS. To watch carefully over the affections of my heart, and promptly and firmly to subdue disordered impulses.

(1) Matt., xv, 18. — (2) John, viii, 46. — (3) Id., xviii, 38. — (4) Ps. i, 12. — (5) Job, xiv, 4.

POINT II. — THE HEART OF JESUS IS FREE
FROM ALL TEMPTATION TO SIN.

CONSIDERATIONS. St. Paul the Apostle, although confirmed in grace, acknowledged that day and night his mind and heart were troubled with phantoms of sin, with constant incitements to sin. He grieved for it, and complained bitterly : *There was given me a sting of my flesh, an angel of Satan, to buffet me* (1). Our Lord did not experience this, nor could He experience any such thing. He permitted the evil spirit, it is true, to tempt and urge Him to sin, but these temptations were solely exterior; they never could find access to His Heart, nor alter its sweet and perfect serenity. How many fresh beauties are added to the Divine Beauty of the Heart of Jesus by this invariable serenity!

APPLICATIONS. However careful we are to prevent or to suppress the disordered impulses of our hearts, we will never be able to enjoy perfect and lasting peace in this world. The evil inclinations introduced into our hearts through the sin of our first parents, will constantly maintain this restlessness by inciting us to do evil. It is only by resisting them unceasingly that we can keep them in subjection. Therefore we are constrained to live at war with ourselves or, as the Apostle says, *with the sin that dwelleth in me* (2). These are the conditions under which we live. We must not complain over much, however; for the fiercer the struggle, the more glorious will be the victory, and the greater also will be our reward

(1) II *Corin.*, XII. 7. — (2) *Rom.*, VII. 17.

in heaven. Besides, the Heart of Jesus is ever open to us as an assured refuge and an impregnable stronghold.

AFFECTIONS. O Jesus, grant me peace of heart, with victory over my disordered passions.

RESOLUTIONS. Never to be discouraged, but to take refuge in the Heart of Jesus in times of conflict.

POINT III. — THE HEART OF JESUS IS FREE
FROM EVEN THE THOUGHT OF SIN.

CONSIDERATIONS. If it be true to say of the Mother of Jesus that never, for the reason that she was conceived without sin, did there arise in her heart any evil thought which disturbed its peace, with how much more reason can it be said of her Divine Son? Moreover, Jesus Christ had perfect mastery over His thoughts, and over the impressions of His Heart. He permitted or excluded, according as He willed, thoughts of sorrow or of joy.

APPLICATIONS. With us it is very different, for we submit to evil thoughts in spite of ourselves. They follow us, and trouble us always and everywhere, even in our prayers, and before the altar. Unhappily the germ of evil has been deposited in our hearts by original sin : *The imagination and thought of man's heart are prone to evil from his youth*, say the Scriptures (1). This condition frequently makes us grieve and we are tempted to complain to God. But do we not aggravate it by granting too great a liberty to our senses, above all to our eyes, which are called by the Holy Ghost,

(1) *Gen.*, viii, 21.

the windows of the soul : *Death is come up through our windows*, says the prophet Jeremias (1).

COLLOQUY. With our Guardian Angel. Pray him to obtain for you the grace to be, like him, always pure, recollected and united to God in the midst of the depravity, tumult and dissipation of the world.

SATURDAY.

THE HUMILITY OF THE HEART OF JESUS.

I. *Prelude*. See Jesus showing you His Heart and saying : *learn of me because I am meek, and humble of heart* (2)

II. *Prelude*. Ask for grace to grow incessantly in the esteem and practice of humility.

POINT I. — THE HUMILITY OF THE HEART OF JESUS
IS SHOWN BY HIS LOVE OF HUMILIATIONS.

CONSIDERATIONS. Humility of heart or of the will, distinct from humility of mind or of appreciation is a virtue, that is to say, a habitual disposition of the will by which man, forgetting self, seeks only the glory of God in all things. Dead to self, the humble man lives but for God. God alone occupies his thoughts; He alone is the motive and aim of all he does, desires, fears or hopes, because to God alone are honour and glory due. Our Lord was eminently such throughout all His mortal career, as proved by these words : *I seek not my own glory* (3), a proof throughout His life, which St. Paul sums up in these words : *He humbled himself* (4).

(1) *Jeremias*, ix. 21. — (2) *Matt.*, xi. 29. — (3) *John*, viii. 50.
— (4) *Philipp.*, ii. 8.

APPLICATIONS. Is this humility in me? Is it true that always and in all things I seek only the glory and service of God? Must I not acknowledge on the contrary, that in my innermost heart there is a secret desire to seek self or the appreciation of men in all my actions, even in my works of charity, zeal and piety? If this be the case, then I have not yet learnt to be humble of heart like my Divine Master; how little I resemble Him!

AFFECTIONS. Fervent desires to model your heart on that of the Heart of Jesus. O my Divine Saviour, teach me to be humble of heart.

RESOLUTIONS. To-day I will watch particularly over the motives and intentions which prompt my actions.

POINT II. -- THE HUMILITY OF THE HEART OF JESUS
IS SHOWN BY HIS WORDS.

CONSIDERATIONS. True humility, hidden in the depths of the heart, is manifested before men by our words: *Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh*, says Jesus Christ (1). In this way also it was manifested in our Divine Lord when conversing with men. Did He seek for appreciation for His own Person in His conversations? No; *my glory is nothing* (2). He said. It was always of the glory and love due to His heavenly Father that He spoke, and always in such sublime terms, and under such attractive figures that the Apostles said to Him wonderingly at the Last Supper: *Lord, shew us the Father, and it is enough for us* (3).

(1) Matt., xii, 34. — (2) John viii, 54. — (3) Id., xiv, 8.

APPLICATIONS. Reflect here on your own conduct. Do those who constantly converse with you see that the thought of God, the Author of all God is in your innermost heart, and that you desire above all things to promote His glory? Do they not on the contrary, often hear you speak with self-satisfaction, if not with boasting, of yourself, your past or present deeds, of your family, your qualities or your talents? Throwing discredit or blame on others? Constantly defending your feelings and opinions obstinately? answering those who contradict you with bitterness and anger. If so, can you believe that you are truly humble of heart? Ask others what they think; they will answer: *Thy speech doth discover thee* (1), that is to say, that you are full of self, and dominated by self-love.

AFFECTIONS. Humble yourself profoundly before God for being still so far from true humility. Ask for *a contrite and humble heart* (2)

RESOLUTIONS. Not to speak of yourself, either well or otherwise unless there is serious reason for it; that is the rule given by St. Francis de Sales.

POINT III. — THE HUMILITY OF THE HEART OF JESUS
IS SHOWN IN HIS ACTIONS.

CONSIDERATIONS. The entire life of Jesus Christ was nothing but a succession of humiliations. He suffered them gladly in order to encourage us to practice humility. He was born in a stable; He lived unknown to the entire world for thirty years; and during the three

(1) Matt., XXVI, 73. — (2) Ps., l., 19.

years of His evangelical ministry, He allowed envy and calumny to treat Him as a seducer, impostor, and as one possessed of a devil. Finally He died between two thieves, receiving the punishment meted out to criminals. Would we not say that He sought above all to demean and efface Himself?

APPLICATIONS. If I were really humble of heart I should act in this way also. Instead of seeking praise, honour and marks of esteem, I should seek to be ignored by men in order to please God alone: I should seek to withdraw from the world and from the memory of men, so that God alone would be all. At least, I should never be troubled nor discouraged when others thought or spoke ill of me, and when they reproved or humbled me. Does this happen?

COLLOQUY. With Jesus, so humble of heart and so profoundly humiliated.

SUNDAY.

THE SUBMISSION OF THE HEART OF JESUS.

I. *Prelude.* Imagine Jesus meek and humble of heart saying: *I have given you an example (of obedience) that as I have done to you, so you do also* (1).

II. *Prelude.* Ask for the necessary graces to model your heart on that of the submissive and gentle Heart of your loving Saviour.

POINT I. — THE ADMIRABLE SUBMISSION OF THE HEART
OF JESUS TO GOD HIS FATHER.

CONSIDERATIONS. Obedience is the first fruit of humility. Jesus is humble of heart; He loves

(1) John, XIII, 15.

to proclaim it; therefore He is submissive and obedient of heart. He assures us that He had made the Will of His heavenly Father His own : *Father... not my will, but thine be done* (1), and that He conforms to it always and in everything : *I do always the things that please Him* (2). The greatest repugnances of nature could not dissuade Him from doing this, as is proved by His Agony in the Garden of Olives. His obedience was perfect, because the principle from which it rose was perfect : — He did the Will of His Father because it was His Will : *Yea, Father : for so hath it seemed good in thy sight* (3).

APPLICATIONS. What a sublime Model is presented to me here. Have I endeavoured to reproduce it in myself? Have I also taken the Will of God as the rule of my will? Have I always accepted the different events of my life, pleasant or disagreeable, with entire submission of heart to the Will of God, without whose permission nothing can befall us in this world? Have I always obeyed in the spirit of faith and love?

AFFECTIONS. O Jesus, grant me grace to understand and to imitate faithfully the submission and obedience of Thy Heart.

RESOLUTIONS. I will try to-day to do all my actions, small or great, in a spirit of obedience.

POINT II. — THE ADMIRABLE SUBMISSION OF THE HEART OF JESUS TO MARY AND JOSEPH.

CONSIDERATIONS. *He... was subject to them* (4). That, in a few words, is the history of Jesus

(1) Luke, XXII, 42. — (2) John, VIII, 29. — (3) Matt., XI, 26.
— (4) Luke, II, 51.

Christ's life during the thirty years that He lived in retirement with Mary His Mother and Joseph His foster-father. What do we see? — A God subject to two creatures? Is this not incompatible with the supreme and inalienable dominion of Divinity over all creatures? No, because Jesus is subject in reality to God His Father, and sees His representatives in Mary and Joseph.

APPLICATIONS. This is the ideal and model of the obedience of faith, of the true virtue of obedience : to be subject to God in the person of those who represent Him, and of whom He says : *He that heareth you, heareth me* (1). It is the only obedience worthy of man, which far from lowering him, raises and ennobles him. To obey thus, is to have no other will than that of God. See if you submit to and obey all your rightful superiors in that spirit of faith, setting aside their personal merit. If so, your obedience will be, like that of your Divine Model, perfect within the limits of possibility; it will be prompt, generous and comprehensive, and moreover, it will be full of merit before God.

AFFECTIONS. Rouse yourself to an ever increasing appreciation and love of the obedience of faith. Prove to Jesus that you desire to excel therein ever more and more.

RESOLUTIONS. To be on my guard against all obedience which is too human, based in a greater or lesser degree on interest or fear.

POINT III. — THE ADMIRABLE SUBMISSION OF THE HEART OF JESUS TOWARDS ALL CLASSES OF PEOPLE.

CONSIDERATIONS. Jesus always followed the

(1) Luke, x, 16.

same principle we have considered, by submitting to and obeying even criminal men whose hypocrisy He had exposed to the people. Caiaphas as high priest adjures Him to say whether He is or is not the Son of God, and Jesus at once breaks the silence in which He had wrapt Himself, and confesses the whole truth. He submits to and obeys even pagans; Pontius Pilate acting as governor of Judea, condemns Him to the punishment of the cross, and Jesus submits without a word of reply. He even obeys His executioners, for they order Him to stretch out His arms upon the cross, and He does it with perfect submission of spirit and heart, *becoming* as the Apostle observes, *obedient unto death, even to the death of the cross* (1).

APPLICATIONS. It was for love of us, to instruct and encourage us that Jesus gave us these great examples of obedience. Never forget them, and never complain that over much is expected from you, or that you are given commands which are too difficult to obey. O, If the Heart of Jesus, that Heart humble and obedient even unto the death of the cross, were ever before your eyes, you would never experience any difficulty in perfect obedience.

COLLOQUY. With our loving Saviour Jesus Christ. — We should thank Him for all the examples and the encouragement He has given us. — We should also ask His pardon for the many reservations and imperfections which usually accompany our obedience.

(1) *Philpp.*, ii, 8.

MONDAY.

THE MEEKNESS OF THE HEART
OF JESUS.

I. *Prelude.* Imagine Jesus Christ showing us His Heart and saying *Learn of me, because I am meek... of heart* (1)

II. *Prelude.* Ask that you may understand, esteem and love meekness.

POINT I. — THE MEEKNESS OF THE HEART OF JESUS
IS MANIFESTED IN ALL HIS PERSON.

CONSIDERATIONS. Of all attractive qualities of the heart, meekness is that which is most noticeable and most appreciated. The man with a gentle compassionate heart is no sooner known than loved. We feel drawn to him and become deeply attached to him, so that we grieve when we have to part from him. Consequently it is easy to form some idea of the incomparable meekness of Jesus, since according to the account given in the Gospels, thousands of men of all conditions followed Him in His evangelical ministry, often for the space of three days unable to leave Him, without thinking of food, as is indicated by the narrative of the miraculous multiplication of bread (2), so charmed were they with His gentleness and the charm shed around Him by His meekness of Heart.

APPLICATIONS. Do you wish to know if your meekness of heart resembles that of your Divine Master? Judge by its fruits. See to what

(1) Matt., xi, 29. — (2) Id., xv.

extent you have the sympathy and confidence of those around you, see if they try to keep away from you, for fear of being continually contradicted or drawn into bitter or trying discussions.

AFFECTIONS. O Sweet Heart of Jesus, teach me to be meek and humble of heart like Thee.

RESOLUTIONS. To subdue vigorously all disposition to hardness of heart or character which may be found in yourself.

POINT II. — THE MECKNESS OF THE HEART OF JESUS
IS MANIFESTED BY HIS WORDS.

CONSIDERATIONS. Every page of the Holy Gospels bears testimony to this. What meekness there is in these words : *I am the Good Shepherd. The good shepherd giveth his life for his sheep* (1). *Jerusalem, Jerusalem... how often would I have gathered thy children as the bird doth her brood under her wings and thou wouldst not* (2). Then in these words addressed to Judas when the traitor was in the very act of consummating his treason : *Friend, whereto art thou come?* (3). *Judas, dost thou betray the Son of man with a kiss?* (4). Above all, what meekness in the prayer He uttered for His executioners when He was dying : *Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do* (5).

APPLICATIONS. If it be true that from the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks, must I not conclude that I have made little progress

(1) John, x, 11. — (2) Luke, xiii, 34. — (3) Matt., xxvi, 50.
— (4) Luke, xxii, 48. — (5) Id., xxiii, 34.

so far in modelling my heart on that of my Saviour? I am still so hard in my judgments of others, so quick and harsh in censuring their faults, in exaggerating them, and in reproving them. Jesus answers with calmness and meekness those who accused Him of imaginary crimes, and I lose my temper and speak bitter words against those who point out my real faults. Jesus finds an excuse in His Heart for His executioners, and I become impatient on the mere suspicion that harm is intended.

AFFECTIONS. Acknowledgment and sorrow for having profited so little in the school of my Divine Master, Who daily teaches me this beautiful lesson : *Learn of me, because I am meek and humble of heart* (1).

RESOLUTIONS. To-day I will give particular heed to my words, and the affections of my heart.

POINT III — THE MEEKNESS OF THE HEART OF JESUS
IS MANIFESTED IN HIS ACTIONS.

CONSIDERATIONS. How severely was the meekness of Jesus tried! During the entire course of His public life, He was constantly exposed to hatred and calumny, and to innumerable insults from the doctors and princes of the nation. They went the length of telling Him before all the people, that He was possessed of the devil; that He only worked miracles with the help of Beelzebub, the prince of devils. Yet the meekness of Jesus never failed; it was unalterable to His last breath. O, how justly

(1) Matt., xi, 29.

can He say to us : *Learn of me, because I am meek and humble of heart.*

APPLICATIONS. To be meek and patient among friends who are full of kindness is not difficult. Consequently under such circumstances there is no virtue of meekness, nor the merit of that virtue. To be meek and humble of heart is to be able to bear wrongs patiently, and to render good for evil, as Jesus Christ did. Have you done that? Strive at least with constancy and generosity, to attain to that perfection so that these words of Jesus Christ may be applied to you : *Blessed are the meek : for they shall possess the land* (1).

COLLOQUY. With St. Francis de Sales, who is so celebrated for his invariable meekness; a virtue which was especially meritorious in him since he was born with a strong character and impatient temper.

TUESDAY.

THE GENEROSITY OF THE HEART OF JESUS.

I *Prelude.* See Jesus showing us His Heart and saying : *Behold this heart which has so loved men.*

II. *Prelude.* Ask for the dispositions of a heart wholly dedicated to the interests of Jesus Christ.

POINT I. — THE GENEROSITY OF THE HEART OF JESUS
IS PROVED
BY THE SACRIFICE HE MAKES OF HIS REPUTATION.

CONSIDERATIONS. We judge of the generosity of a man's heart by the greatness of the sacri-

(1) Matt. v, 4.

fices he makes for the good of his fellow-creatures. By this too, we should judge the generosity of the Heart of Jesus. What is there that He did not sacrifice for us? We might say that He only shared our benefits of this life in order to make the most generous sacrifice of them for our good. Of all these benefits, the one which men guard most jealously, and with reason, is honour, a reputation for integrity; and it is this which Jesus sacrificed as a reparation for the dishonour paid to His heavenly Father by sin, and to reconcile us to Him. Not only does He consent to be the victim of the most atrocious calumnies, but He chose to die stripped of all reputation. Contemplate Him hanging on the cross. He is defied on all sides to come down if He be really the Son of God. *Let Christ the King of Israel come down now from the cross, that we may see and believe* (1). He does not come down. Therefore, they conclude that He cannot, that He is only a vile impostor, and the most execrable of men. In this way He dies.

APPLICATIONS. Probably God will not ask of you a complete sacrifice of your reputation as He has asked it of several Saints, amongst them, St. John of the Cross, who was cast into prison, and was actually dying a victim to calumny, without uttering a word of complaint. But what Our Lord does ask, and will often ask of us is, that we should know how to sacrifice all resentment, all thoughts of revenge, when through thoughtlessness or malice, our

(1) Mark, xv, 32.

self-love has been wounded; that we should know how to receive, without showing any anger, advice or a reproof given through duty or friendship. The efforts implied in these victories won over self, without being heroic, will at times be very hard, and will not fail to please the Heart of Jesus, and merit His favours.

AFFECTIONS. Ask for a generous heart capable of making such sacrifices as are most trying to nature whenever necessary.

RÉSOLUTIONS. Not to be troubled about your honour or reputation, unless the service of God and your neighbour is involved, or your social position necessitates it.

POINT II. — THE GENEROSITY OF THE HEART OF JESUS IS PROVED BY THE SACRIFICE HE MAKES OF THE ENJOYMENTS OF LIFE.

CONSIDERATIONS. Jesus was innocence itself, He had no sins to expiate, therefore He had every right to enjoy all the comforts of life. Yet He generously renounced them; He spent His whole life in the severest privations, and in sufferings of body and soul such as no one had ever endured. Why? Because He had undertaken to satisfy the Divine Justice for all our sinful indulgence. Why again? In order to encourage us by His example to lead a life of penance so that we might live eternally as elect and blessed.

APPLICATIONS. We are guilty; we have much to expiate. If severe penances are beyond our strength, at least let us practise many small privations in the spirit of sacrifice; let us mortify ourselves frequently during the day,

and suffer without ever complaining. This is very little, it is true; yet, do you do it? With what amount of generosity and constancy?

AFFECTIONS. — Admire — praise — and bless the sublime generosity of the Heart of Jesus.

RESOLUTIONS. Gladly to take advantage of opportunities for mortifying self, and for making some sacrifice for the love of Jesus.

POINT III. — THE GENEROSITY OF THE HEART OF JESUS
IS PROVED BY THE SACRIFICE HE MAKES OF HIS LIFE.

CONSIDERATIONS. According to the testimonies of Our Lord Himself, the most generous sacrifice that one man can make for another is the sacrifice of his life; to die in order to spare him the horrors of death. Is this not what Jesus has done for us? Yes, we can all say with the Apostle : *He loved me and delivered himself for me* (1).

APPLICATIONS. Do I always keep in mind this sacrifice of the most unutterable love which my Saviour laid upon Himself for me? Does it arouse in my heart the very natural sentiment of gratitude? And does this gratitude manifest itself in deeds, by means of many small sacrifices? Opportunities occur so frequently, and I evade them on vain pretexts. O how little does my heart resemble the Heart of Jesus!

COLLOQUY. Prostrate before the Heart of my loving Saviour, I will make amends as well as I can; I will dedicate and consecrate myself to Him for ever.

(1) *Gal.*, ii, 20.

WEDNESDAY.

THE ZEAL OF THE HEART OF JESUS.

I. *Prelude.* Hear Jesus saying these words : *Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he send labourers into his harvest* (1).

II. *Prelude.* Ask for a spirit of zeal like the zeal of the Heart of Jesus.

POINT I. — THE ARDENT ZEAL OF THE HEART OF JESUS.

CONSIDERATIONS. Zeal for the glory of God and for the sanctification of souls, is nothing more than the love of God overflowing from the heart of the one who loves, to his fellow-creatures; he longs to win them all for God and to see them all united in the happiness he hopes to enjoy in heaven. The measure of love then is the measure of our zeal. Consequently we can judge of the zeal of the Heart of Jesus, since He loves His heavenly Father and men with an ineffable love. These few words which came from His Heart may at least give us a faint idea of it : *I am come to cast fire on the earth, and what will I, but that it be kindled in all hearts? And I have a baptism, wherewith I am to be baptised; and how am I straitened until it be accomplished* (2)? that is to say, until I have consummated a life wholly consecrated to doing good, by the immolation of myself.

APPLICATIONS. To procure the glory of God and the salvation of souls, is a cause that the Saints have always had at heart above all else,

(1) Luke, x, 2. — (2) Id., xii, 49-50.

because they were filled with the love of God. We find proof of this in nearly all the Psalms of holy King David : *The zeal of thy house hath eaten me up : and the reproaches of them that reproached thee are fallen upon me* (1). *A fainting hath taken hold of me, because of the wicked that forsake thy law* (2). Are these affections, these noble aspirations in your heart also? If they are, they will not remain ineffective, but will make you eloquent in the cause of God and of souls; they will help you to find numberless means of gaining souls for God. Is this the case?

AFFECTIONS. *Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort* (3) in obedience to the following request of Thy Divine Son : *Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he send labourers into his harvest* (4). I beseech Thee, and shall not cease to ask Thee in all humility to raise up many an evangelical labourer *mighty in his words and in his deeds* (5), and thus, *Let all people give praise to thee* (6).

RESOLUTIONS. To assist and spread as much as possible the work of the propagation of the faith.

POINT II. — THE EXTENT OF THE ZEAL
OF THE HEART OF JESUS.

CONSIDERATIONS. Though our Divine Saviour's zeal was so fervent, He restricted its exercise to the inhabitants of Palestine; His mission was to be confined to them. Such was the will of His Father, and He resigned Himself to it

(1) *Ps.* LXVIII, 10. — (2) *Ibid.* CXVIII, 53. — (3) *II Corin.*, 1, 3.
— (4) *Luke*, x, 2. — (5) *Acts*, VII, 22. — (6) *Ps.* LXVI, 4.

with perfect conformity of will : *Yea, Father : for so hath it seemed good in thy sight* (1). But in His Heart, He embraced the whole world ; He prayed for its conversion to His Father every day of His hidden life, and during the three years of His public ministry He prepared His Apostles for this great mission, promising them, moreover His support *even to the consummation of the world* (2).

APPLICATIONS. Let us learn to follow the example of our Divine Master, first, by regulating our zeal according to wise guidance even should its action be restrained within narrow limits, or contained in the occupations of an obscure and ordinary life in the eyes of the world ; secondly, by never bearing envy, but rather with all our heart and soul helping those who may be called to a more brilliant career in the exercise of their zeal. Lastly, to let our zeal embrace the whole world, never failing to assist by our prayers, the evangelical labourers in all parts of the world.

AFFECTIONS and RESOLUTIONS. As in the preceeding Point.

POINT III. — THE TRIUMPH OF THE ZEAL
OF THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS.

CONSIDERATIONS. *And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, and immolated on the cross, will draw all things to myself* (3). In these words, Jesus announced to the Jews the triumph of the zeal in His Heart. What a triumph ! Idolatry vanquished and scorned ; the name of God known and adored throughout the world ; the

(1) Matt., xi, 26. — (2) Id., xxviii, 20. — (3) John, xii, 32.

AFFECTIONS. *Heart of Jesus, Ocean of Goodness, have pity on us.* (Litany.)

RESOLUTIONS. To repeat this aspiration often during this day.

POINT II. — THE KINDNESS OF THE HEART OF JESUS
IS MANIFESTED BY HIS WORDS.

CONSIDERATIONS. Are not these words, all from the lips, or rather from the Heart of Jesus, full of wondrous kindness and tenderness : *Come to me, all you that labour, and are burdened, and I will refresh you* (1). *It is I, fear ye not* (2). *Be of good heart, son, thy sins are forgiven thee* (3). *Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not over me, but weep for yourselves and for your children* (4). *I am the Good Shepherd. The good shepherd giveth his life for his sheep* (5). *Be ye therefore merciful* (6). *I will have mercy, and no sacrifice* (7).

APPLICATIONS. Do your words bear testimony also to the kindness and tenderness of your heart? In judging the public or private conduct of others, do not your lips frequently give utterance to expressions of exaggerated and merciless criticism, and of rash and unmerited censure because you judge merely from appearances without sufficient knowledge of the facts? If so, does your heart resemble the Heart of Jesus?

AFFECTIONS. Praise and bless the kindness and tenderness of the Heart of Jesus. Ask forgiveness for your hardness of heart, and want of feeling.

(1) Matt., xi, 28. — (2) Id., xiv, 27. — (3) Id., ix, 2. — (4) Luke, xxiii, 28. — (5) John, x, 11. — (6) Luke, vi, 36. — (7) Matt., xii, 7.

RESOLUTIONS. To pay particular attention to our conversations when making an examination of conscience, so that we may the better know our heart, and model it on that of the Heart of Jesus.

POINT III. — THE KINDNESS OF THE HEART OF JESUS
IS MANIFESTED BY HIS ACTIONS.

CONSIDERATIONS. The entire life of Our Lord was nothing more than a succession of acts of goodness bearing testimony to the most loving and compassionate of hearts. He could see no physical or moral suffering without being touched, and without relieving it. Here are two instances among countless others. Near Naim He meets a widowed mother, inconsolable at the loss of her only son. Jesus immediately, says St. Luke, *being moved with mercy towards her* (1), raises him from the dead. On another occasion, at the sight of four thousand men who had followed Him for three days in the desert, He says to the Apostles : *I have compassion on the multitudes... lest they faint in the way* (2), and for them He performed the miraculous multiplication of the seven loaves of bread. That expression : *He was moved with mercy*, is found no less than eight times in the Gospel.

APPLICATIONS. We give great pain to the most tender Heart of Jesus when we do not trust in His goodness or in the forgiveness He has granted us in confession through the ministry of His priest; When we consider His holy yoke heavy and hard to bear; when we turn so readily from confidence to fear, and then to

(1) Luke, vii, 13. — (2) Matt., xv, 32.

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(1) Matt., xi, 28. — (2) Id., xiv, 27. — (3) Id., ix, 2. —
(4) Luke, xxiii, 28. — (5) John, x, 11. — (6) Luke, vi, 36.
— (7) Matt., xii, 7.

RESOLUTIONS. To pay particular attention to our conversations when making an examination of conscience, so that we may the better know our heart, and model it on that of the Heart of Jesus.

POINT III. — THE KINDNESS OF THE HEART OF JESUS
IS MANIFESTED BY HIS ACTIONS.

CONSIDERATIONS. The entire life of Our Lord was nothing more than a succession of acts of goodness bearing testimony to the most loving and compassionate of hearts. He could see no physical or moral suffering without being touched, and without relieving it. Here are two instances among countless others. Near Naim He meets a widowed mother, inconsolable at the loss of her only son. Jesus immediately, says St. Luke, *being moved with mercy towards her* (1), raises him from the dead. On another occasion, at the sight of four thousand men who had followed Him for three days in the desert, He says to the Apostles : *I have compassion on the multitudes... lest they faint in the way* (2), and for them He performed the miraculous multiplication of the seven loaves of bread. That expression : *He was moved with mercy*, is found no less than eight times in the Gospel.

APPLICATIONS. We give great pain to the most tender Heart of Jesus when we do not trust in His goodness or in the forgiveness He has granted us in confession through the ministry of His priest; When we consider His holy yoke heavy and hard to bear; when we turn so readily from confidence to fear, and then to

(1) Luke, vii, 13. — (2) Matt., xv, 32.

discouragement, and even to despair. Let us always be on our guard so that we may never grieve Him in this way.

COLLOQUY. With St. John the Evangelist, who at the Last Supper rested on the Heart of Jesus, and from there imbibed that wonderful tenderness and loving compassion which breathes from his three Epistles.

FEAST OF THE SACRED HEART.

OUR DUTIES

TOWARDS THE HEART OF JESUS

DWELLING WITH US IN THE BLESSED SACRAMENT.

I. *Prelude.* Imagine you see Jesus showing you from the tabernacle, His Heart inflamed with love and saying : *My son, give me thy heart* (1).

II. *Prelude.* Earnestly ask Our Divine Lord to fill your heart with His love.

POINT I. — WHAT DOES THE HEART OF JESUS DO FOR MEN IN THE BLESSED SACRAMENT?

CONSIDERATIONS. It performs there the office of a Mediator, by continually interceding for us. If in spite of the innumerable sins which cry aloud to heaven for vengeance, God does not destroy the human race, we may be quite convinced that we owe it to the Heart of Jesus, for It repeats this petition for grace perpetually : *Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do* (2). He performs the office of a Priest, by immolating Himself every day for us on thousands of altars. He performs the office of

(1) *Prov.*, xxiii, 26. — (2) *Luke*, xxiii, 34.

our Father by feeding us with His own Flesh and Blood. He performs the office of Master and Teacher, by teaching us through His state in the Blessed Sacrament, the virtues which are most necessary for us : recollection, silence, humility, scorn of the world, patience, resignation and devotion.

APPLICATIONS. Those are some of the numerous claims which the Heart of Jesus has to our love. I know them, and understand and realise all that they demand of me in return, yet I seem to remain indifferent in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament, and even in my Communions. How is this? Is it not because I am not sufficiently detached from self and from the world? or because certain affections which fill my heart are, if not sinful, at least too material?

AFFECTIONS. O most holy Heart of Jesus! teach me to die entirely to self, that I may solely live for Thee and by Thee!

RESOLUTIONS. To repeat this pious aspiration frequently to-day.

POINT II. — WHAT DO MEN DO FOR THE HEART
OF JESUS?

CONSIDERATIONS. Without speaking of the blasphemies poured forth by Jews and heretics, what does Jesus receive in return for His love, even from those who believe in His Presence in the Blessed Sacrament? From some it is true, He receives day and night the homage of adoration, gratitude and filial devotion which is due to Him; but from the great majority of men what does He receive? Neglect, disdain, profanation and sacrilege.

APPLICATIONS. Have I never deserved any of these reproaches? What do I see when I recall my past? And what must I think of the present? My negligence in visiting the Heart of Jesus burning with love of me in the Blessed Sacrament, my want of devotion in His Presence and my want of eagerness and of preparation to receive Him in Holy Communion? Should not all this make me fear that I do not possess the dispositions which the Heart of Jesus has a right to demand of me?

AFFECTIONS. Ardent desires to be amongst the small number of true adorers and friends of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

RESOLUTIONS. Not to neglect any means of realising these desires, especially to-day.

POINT III. — WHAT DOES THE HEART OF JESUS EXPECT FROM US, ABOVE ALL, ON THIS DAY.

CONSIDERATIONS. He expects us to strive by more than ordinary devotion and fervour, to make amends for the neglect, disdain, insults and profanations of which so many Catholics are guilty; that with this intention, we should visit Him frequently to-day, that we should endeavour to receive Holy Communion with great interior devotion, to hear Mass, and if possible go to Benediction, with special devotion, and there with the priest, to make with all the strength of our soul, the *Act of Reparation to His Divine Heart*. If we are prevented from doing this, at least let us make it privately.

APPLICATIONS. There are so many reasons for doing this to-day, and for doing it with our whole heart! Who amongst us has not immense debts to pay to the Divine Heart of Jesus?

numerous faults and infidelities for which to make amends? many graces and favours to ask for? Add to these motives of private interest, motives of general interest which concern the whole world, and particularly the Catholic Church, so violently persecuted, and you will have no difficulty in finding countless ways of honouring the adorable Heart of Jesus.

COLLOQUY. With St. Margaret Mary Alacoque, to whom Jesus deigned to reveal the secrets of His Heart.

N. B. — Take from the intercalary month which now follows, the Meditations which were not used before Ash-Wednesday. They will be equal in number to the days which yet remain until July 1st, where the second volume commences, and they will form the continuation of the public life of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was interrupted by the meditation on His Passion, and His glorious Resurrection.

INTERCALAR MONTH.

MEDITATION I.

*Meditations in continuation to those ending
Feb. 3rd.*

THE MOTIVES, SIGNS AND MEANS OF SPIRITUAL PROGRESS.

I. *Prelude.* Hear Jesus Christ saying these words : *Be you therefore perfect, as also your heavenly Father is perfect* (1).

II *Prelude.* Ask for grace to make constant progress in virtue.

(1) Matt., v, 48.

POINT I. — MOTIVES FOR MAKING SPIRITUAL PROGRESS.

CONSIDERATIONS. Duty is the first motive. Do you not think that this duty is implied by these words addressed by our Lord, not to His Apostles alone, but to all His disciples? *Be ye therefore perfect, as also your heavenly Father is perfect.* Clearly these words do not imply that we can ever attain to the Infinite Perfection of God, but they tell us that we should, by constant effort, strive to attain greater perfection, in other words, to make progress in virtue. Utility is the second motive. To make progress in virtue is to acquire new merits, new pledges of glory and happiness in heaven. What is more attractive than that? Facility is the third motive. Our advantages are so great. We have superabundant means, and grace, far from failing us, never ceases to stimulate and help us.

APPLICATIONS. How is it that we are yet so imperfect, that we make so little progress? The reason is that our will is not sufficiently powerful nor constant. We desire but do not will efficaciously; we begin and we do not finish. Progress implies effort, and we do not make these efforts continuously, or at least, we draw back at the smallest difficulty.

AFFECTIONS. O my soul, how long wilt thou be deceived and lay up for thyself bitter and vain regrets when life comes to an end, and God asks for a strict account of the many means of salvation and sanctification entrusted to thee?

RESOLUTIONS. I must shake off my torpor; I

will practise the resolutions I made when alone with God in retreat He enlightened me with the vivid light of faith.

POINT II. — THE SIGNS OF SPIRITUAL PROGRESS.

CONSIDERATIONS. Here are some of the signs by which you may know if you are advancing in the path of perfection. First, if you feel more deeply thankful that you have given yourself to the service of God, and if you are ever more and more devoted to Him. Secondly, if you fall more rarely into certain venial faults which had become a habit with you. Thirdly, if you conquer temptations more easily. Fourthly, if your acts of mortification become more frequent. Fifthly, if you find new methods from time to time which give you greater devotion in your Communions, and in your visits to the Blessed Sacrament, etc. Sixthly, if you feel an increased contempt for the world and all that is not God, and less difficulty in suppressing thoughts of self love : and lastly, if you bear crosses and humiliations with more courage, calmness and resignation.

APPLICATIONS. Try to obtain great profit from that consideration ; it should enlighten you and fill you ~~with you~~ with much joy or with great shame and fear.

AFFECTIONS. I will ask God for a magnanimous heart, and rouse myself for spiritual conflict by dwelling on the thought that progress is not so hard as many people imagine.

RESOLUTIONS. I will practise the counsel given by the author of the *Imitation* : *Be watchful over thyself, stir up thyself, warn*

thyself, and whatsoever becometh of others, neglect not thyself. The more violence thou usest against thyself, the more thou shalt progress (1).

POINT III. — SOME MEANS OF SPIRITUAL PROGRESS.

CONSIDERATIONS. There are three principal means. The first is to prepare yourself for spiritual conflict each morning on waking, by resolving to make the day fruitful in victories and good works. The second is to keep your heart as much as possible full of spiritual joy and confidence. That is the great means of making rapid progress in the service of God, as holy King David declares from experience : *I have run the way of thy commandments, when thou didst enlarge my heart* (2). The third means, implied in all of them, is to retain your first fervour, and if you have lost it, to renew it. Why is it that in religious communities novices are usually seen to make such rapid progress? Because generally their fervour is very great.

APPLICATIONS. Employ these means. See which may be of most service to you, and put it into practice with energy and constancy. How great will be your joy at the approach of death, and throughout eternity.

COLLOQUY. With St. Andrew Avellin who made a vow to advance continually in the path of perfection, and who never ceased to be faithful to this vow.

(1) *Imitation* : Book I, Chap. xxv. — (2) *Ps.* cxviii, 32.

MEDITATION II.

THE BAPTISM OF CHRIST (1).

HIS PUBLIC LIFE.

I. *Prelude.* See Jesus taking leave of His Blessed Mother in order to go forth to be baptised, and to begin His public life.

II. *Prelude.* Ask for entire detachment from all that can be an obstacle to your salvation.

POINT I. — THE PUBLIC LIFE OF JESUS.

CONSIDERATIONS. The hidden and contemplative life of Jesus must perforce be succeeded by public and active life. The moment appointed by the eternal decrees had come. The peaceful life, the pleasures that Jesus had enjoyed for more than twenty years in the happy home of Nazareth were to come to an end. He must renounce it and enter public life, the distracting, difficult ministry of evangelical zeal. He had to renounce the company of His beloved Mother, and all His relations and friends, to live on alms in the midst of coarse and envious men. His change of abode and of life must have aroused much natural reluctance in the Heart of Jesus as it was like ours. But He stifled the voice of nature that He might only listen to the voice of obedience and zeal for souls.

APPLICATIONS. It may happen, in consequence of the instability of things here below, that you also may have to exchange a pleasant and easy existence for a life of anxiety and of great

(1) It coincides with the first days of January and with the beginning of the thirtieth year of the life of Jesus.

privation, far from your friends and relations. If this should ever be the case revive your faith in Divine Providence; dwell on the thought that all the events of our lives are watched over, and that nothing is more perfect and meritorious than to submit willingly to its impenetrable decrees. This resignation will preserve your serenity, and will be support in the hardest trials.

AFFECTIONS. Do with me, dispose of me, O my God, according to Thy good pleasure and wisdom; I abandon myself to Thee because I know that Thou lovest me (1).

RESOLUTIONS. I will strive to die ever more and more to all that is not God, the Will of God, and the good pleasure of God.

POINT II. — THE BAPTISM OF JESUS.

CONSIDERATIONS. Jesus desired to inaugurate His public life by a great act of humility, by the Baptism of penance He went to receive from the hands of His Precursor: *Then cometh Jesus, says St. Matthew, from Galilee to the Jordan, unto John, to be baptised by him. But John stayed Him saying: I ought to be baptised by thee, and comest thou to me? And Jesus answering said to him: Suffer it to be so now. For so it becometh us to fulfil all justice* (2), that is to say, we should render unto God the glory which is justly due to Him; I by humbling myself profoundly, and you by obeying blindly; in this way we make amends for the injustice done to God by the pride and rebellion of men.

(1) Prayer of St. Augustine. — (2) Matt., iii, 13 15.

APPLICATIONS. What has our loving Saviour desired to teach us by this act? First, That as baptism is the first and most necessary of the Sacraments, humility likewise is the first and most necessary of the moral virtues; — secondly, that it is by humility and the obedience which springs from it that we can please God and bring down His blessings on our work. If these have very often failed to produce fruits of salvation, is it perhaps because we have not always acted on these principles?

AFFECTIONS. Thank God for having exalted you by His humiliations, for having opened for you by Holy Baptism, the entrance to His Church militant and consequently to His Church triumphant, unless you place some obstacle in the way.

RESOLUTIONS. Carefully to preserve deep humility united to steadfast trust.

POINT III. — THE GLORIFICATION OF JESUS.

CONSIDERATIONS. *He that shall humble himself, shall be exalted* (1). We see the fulfilment of that saying in the Baptism of Jesus : *And Jesus being baptised, forthwith came out of the water : and lo, the heavens were opened to him : and he saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove, and coming upon him. And behold a voice from heaven saying : This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased* (2).

APPLICATIONS. All these divine favours which Jesus Christ merited as Man by His profound humiliations in His baptism, have been granted

(1) Matt., xxiii, 12. — (2) Id., iii, 16-17.

you gratuitously in your baptism; immediately the holy water touched your forehead, heaven which had been closed by original sin, was opened to you, the Holy Spirit also descended upon you, taking possession of your heart, and a voice from heaven said : This is now my beloved child.

COLLOQUY. With Jesus. Thank Him for the profound humiliations He endured for love of us, and the inestimable privileges He enabled you to share on the happy day of your holy Baptism. Recall the glad memory, and renew before God the promises you made at that time.

MEDITATION III.

JESUS IS LED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT INTO THE DESERT.

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- I. *Prelude.* Imagine Jesus alone in a dreadful desert.
 - II. *Prelude.* Ask for docility to the inspirations of grace.

POINT I. — JESUS OBEDIENT TO THE IMPULSE
OF THE SPIRIT, GOES INTO THE DESERT.

CONSIDERATIONS. *Jesus being full of the Holy Ghost, says St. Luke, returned from the Jordan, and was led by the Spirit. St. Mark says : The spirit drove him out (1) into the desert (2).*

Although Jesus as Man, possessed the fulness of wisdom and grace, and was exempt from all error, doubt or illusion, He nevertheless desired to act in all things by the impulse of the Holy Ghost alone, to Whom He submitted with

(1) Mark, i, 12. — (2) Luke, iv, 1.

the most generous docility. The Gospel text demonstrates this clearly.

APPLICATIONS. It is the same Holy Spirit who enlightened and enabled you to see the dangers of the path you were following; Who by the victorious impulse of His grace drew you away and led you into the sublime path of virtue. It is He again Who sustains and encourages you, and never ceases to guide and drive you onward in the way of the highest perfection. Would not your progress have been more perceptible if you had always shown complete and generous docility? Whatever you have left undone in the past, do henceforward with constancy and generosity; and as the voice of God is not heard in tumult and noise, endeavour to preserve your recollection and serenity of soul; to form a solitude in the centre of your heart, so that you may experience the effects of that Divine promise : *I... will lead her into the wilderness and I will speak to her heart* (1).

AFFECTIONS. Gratitude. — Sorrow. — Ask for a docile and generous heart.

RESOLUTIONS. To think often of these words of the Apostle to the Romans : *Whosoever are led by the Spirit of God, they are the Sons of God* (2).

POINT II. — JESUS PRAYS AND FASTS IN THE DESERT.

CONSIDERATIONS. The docility with which Jesus abandons Himself to the will of the Holy Spirit is generous and heroic. What does the Spirit impel Him to do? To separate Himself from the world; to retire into a dreadful desert, there to

(1) *Osee*, II, 14. — (2) *Rom.*, VIII, 14.

spend forty days in the most utter isolation, with no companionship save that of wild beasts. *He was with beasts*, says St. Mark (1) without roof or refuge, exposed to all weathers and observing the most rigorous fast, taking no nourishment of any kind : *He ate nothing in those days* (2); persevering in contemplation and prayer, interrupted solely by the tears He shed over our miseries, and by the supplications He addressed to His heavenly Father on our behalf. Thus Jesus passed from the Baptism of penance to works of penance; thus He prepared for His public life and for His ministry.

APPLICATIONS. Learn here from your Divine Master and Model :

First, that holy Baptism, which was for the early Christians, a preparation for martyrdom, is at least for every Christian a preparation for penance, and obliges you to live in the continual exercise of penance : *The life of a Christian*, says the Council of Trent, *should be a continual penance* (3).

Secondly, that it is by means of recollection, mortification and prayer that you should prepare for active work if you wish to ensure its success. Has your conduct been in accordance with these principles of faith? In what way have you departed from them?

AFFECTIONS (4). Ask for the light and grace you require to enable you to know and follow the impulses of the Holy Spirit in all things, as Jesus did.

(1) Mark, i, 13. — (2) Luke, iv, 2. — (3) Sess. XIV, Chap. ix.

(4) Keep in mind the remarks made concerning the colloquies, affections and resolutions on pages 21, 37, 54.

RESOLUTIONS. The love retirement. — To avoid unnecessary journeys and conversations. — To enter into distracting matters only if we are obliged to do so.

POINT III. — JESUS IS TEMPTED IN THE DESERT.

CONSIDERATIONS. *Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert*, says St. Matthew, *to be tempted by the devil* (1). Our Lord had no inclination to evil in Himself; for this reason He allowed the devil to tempt Him. Why did He undergo the humiliating trial of temptation, and the conflict with the spirit of darkness? For our instruction and encouragement. He desired to teach us that temptations are not an evil; that on the contrary, they should serve to maintain our humility, watchfulness and fervour, and thereby make us more pleasing to God; that they are independant of our will; that neither sanctity nor solitude are exempt from them; therefore, they could never disconcert or discourage us.

APPLICATIONS. May these considerations reassure and encourage you; and be ever in your mind, and you will be convinced, by your own experience, of the truth of these words of the Apostle : *God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that which you are able : but will make also with temptation issue, that you may be able to bear it* (2).

COLLOQUY. With the angels, who witnessed the penance of Jesus in the desert.

(1) Matt., iv, 1. — (2) I Corin., x, 13.

MEDITATION IV.
ON THE THREE TEMPTATIONS OF JESUS
SPECIFIED IN THE GOSPEL.

I. *Prelude.* Imagine Satan in human form, approaching Jesus to tempt Him.

II. *Prelude.* Ask for grace to understand and avoid the snares of the devil.

POINT I. — THE TEMPTATION OF GLUTTONY.

CONSIDERATIONS. The devil, like a skilful tempter, studies our diverse dispositions of body and soul to turn us from good, and lead us into evil. Therefore seeing Our Lord overcome by hunger, after a miraculous fast of forty days, he assumes the appearance of a man moved with compassion, and approaching says to Him : *If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread* (1). It was a temptation of gluttony in the sense that had Our Lord promptly satisfied nature by a miracle, He would have anticipated the moment when His Father desired to relieve His necessities by the ministry of angels. Jesus repulsed him with these words from *Deuteronomy* : *Not in bread alone doth man live, but in every word that proceedeth from the mouth of God* (2).

APPLICATIONS. If you have temptations of gluttony, such as anticipating the hour of a meal, exceeding the limit of Christian moderation, seeking too eagerly for what you enjoy, or eating and drinking solely for the pleasure

(1) Matt., iv, 3. — (2) Id., 4.

your nature finds in it, say these words to yourself : *Not in material bread alone doth man live*, but in the spiritual Bread which sustains and developes the life of the soul. The soul above everything. Give the body what is necessary, the soul, an abundance. How senseless I should be if I pleased and idolised my body at the expense of my soul, and my eternal salvation.

AFFECTIONS. Ask God to help you to keep these words of the Wise man always in mind : *In many meats there will be sickness* (1), sickness both of body and soul.

RESOLUTIONS. To decide on a reasonable amount in eating and drinking and keep to it.

POINT II. — THE TEMPTATION OF VAIN-GLORY.

CONSIDERATIONS. Though vanquished the devil renews his attack. He tries another, a more subtle form of temptation which he directs at the intellect which is naturally eager for the renown won by brilliant actions. Having received all power over the Body of Jesus, the devil took Him and set Him upon the pinnacle of the temple, and said to Him : *If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down, for it is written : That he hath given his angels charge over thee, and in their hands shall they bear thee up, lest perhaps thou dash thy foot against a stone* (2). By this stupendous miracle, Jesus would have established His authority, and prepared the way for the triumph of His ministry. We must admit that the devil tempted Him with very

(1) *Eccle.*, xxxvii, 33. — (2) *Matt.*, iv, 5 6.

plausible pretexts. Our Lord merely answered : *It is written again : Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God* (1).

APPLICATIONS. Learn from your Saviour to be ever on your guard against the assaults and snares of the devil, for he is never discouraged. Even our victories supply him with material for temptation. You may have resisted gluttony by abstaining at table from some delicacy ; he will endeavour to inspire you with thoughts of vanity and disdain for those who have not done as much. At other times, he will transform himself into an angel of light ; he will drive you into evil on the pretext that it is good ; to anger slander and vengeance on a pretext of zeal ; to intemperance and idleness on the pretext of health. He will persuade you to risk dangers, in other words to tempt God, on the pretext of inuring you to war and of amassing merits for heaven.

AFFECTIONS. *From the snares of the devil, O Lord, deliver us* (2).

RESOLUTIONS. Not to argue with the tempting spirit, but to repulse him immediately with indignation, as Our Divine Saviour did.

POINT III. — THE TEMPTATION OF AMBITION.

CONSIDERATIONS. The devil, insolently taking advantage of the power given him by Jesus to tempt Him in every way, then transported Him to a very high mountain from where he showed him in an instant, all the kingdom of the world, and said to Him : *To thee I give all this power,*

(1) Matt., iv, 7. — (2) Litany of the Saints.

and the glory of them; for to me they are delivered, and to whom I will, I give them. If thou therefore wilt adore before me, all shall be thine (1). Then Jesus saith to him : Begone, Satan : for it is written; The Lord thy God shalt thou adore, and him only shalt thou serve. Then the devil left him; and behold angels came and ministered to him (2).

APPLICATIONS. This is the way in which the devil tempts and seduces men; by means of fascination, lies and false promises, flattering their pride and all their evil inclinations. Will you still allow yourself to be deceived and seduced? See on the other hand, how faithful and generous God is in consoling and rewarding those who resolutely resist temptation; He sends His angels to strengthen and console them.

COLLOQUY. With your guardian angel.

MEDITATION V.

ON TEMPTATION IN GENERAL.

I. *Prelude.* Hear holy Job saying these words when so severely tried by temptation : *The life of man upon earth is a warfare* (3).

II. *Prelude.* Ask for grace to be faithful and victorious in this warfare with temptation.

POINT I. — THE SOURCE OF OUR TEMPTATIONS.

CONSIDERATIONS. We are necessarily exposed to temptations on account of original sin. We bear the germ in ourselves, as the earth bears

(1) Luke, iv, 6-7. — (2) Matt., iv, 10-11 — (3) *Job*, vii, 1.

the germ of every kind of weed. They arise, primarily, from the disorder introduced by sin into our minds and hearts; from pride and concupiscence. They come to us moreover from the devil, who in his despair at having himself lost heaven, has sworn to prevent us by every means in his power from gaining possession of it. They come to us, thirdly, from everything around us in the world where so many objects appeal to the senses, where there is so much to lead us into evil.

APPLICATIONS. Therefore we should not be surprised if we are continually, and at times violently tempted; nor should we flatter ourselves that we are free from temptations on account of age or any other circumstance. Neither have we any right to attribute all our temptations to the devil, when it is we ourselves who too often provoke them by curiosity, intemperance and idleness; by allowing excessive liberty to our senses; or by indulging in certain affections and friendships in spite of secret misgivings. To act in this way and accuse the devil of being the author of all our temptations is obviously self-deception. Is this not what you may have done? But how will this profit you before the judgment of God?

AFFECTIONS. *Enlighten my eyes that I never sleep in death* (1) by blinding myself regarding the source of my temptations, and giving way to false security.

RESOLUTIONS. To pay special attention in our examinations of conscience to the source of our temptations.

(1) Ps. xii, 4.

POINT II. — THE REMEDY FOR OUR TEMPTATIONS.

CONSIDERATIONS. *Watch ye, and pray that ye enter no into temptation* (1). Watchfulness added to prayer is, according to Jesus Christ, the general remedy against temptation. *Watch*: In what should our vigilance consist? Above all in carefully observing whatever is for us an occasion of temptation, and to avoid it, if it be in our power; — secondly, in examining the source from which our temptations most commonly arise, that we may the better adopt a remedy: — thirdly, in watching over our senses in mortifying them, especially our sight. *Death is come up through our windows* (2), says the Holy Spirit. Fourthly, in paying great attention to the first impressions of evil, or the suggestions of the evil spirit, in order to oppose them with prompt and vigorous resistance; — fifthly, in a constant spirit of recollection, without which this attention and prompt resistance become impossible. *Watch... and pray*: Pray from the moment you wake, uniting your resolution to withstand temptations valiantly, to a petition for the graces you require to gain a victory over them, without which your resolutions would be useless, for abandoned to your own resources, would you not be certain to fail? *Pray* with humility, but with the utmost confidence. *Pray*, above all at the moment of temptation, by invoking the names of Jesus and Mary, and you will never be overcome.

APPLICATIONS. How, and with what amount of

(1) Matt., xxvi, 41. — (2) *Jeremias*, ix, 21.

care, constancy and success have you employed these remedies against temptations?

AFFECTIONS. Never permit me, O my God, to be tempted beyond my strength, and to succumb to temptation; but grant that temptations may help my progress.

RESOLUTIONS. I desire henceforth to make better use of the means in my power, to anticipate and conquer temptations.

POINT III. — THE USE OF OUR TEMPTATIONS.

CONSIDERATIONS. Temptations and trials of all kinds preserve our humility; they detach us from earth, and draw our thoughts and desires to heaven; they lead us to pray, and help to maintain devotion; they provide means of expiating our sins and of acquiring merit; they confirm us in virtue, and unceasingly rekindle our fervour.

APPLICATIONS. Refrain from complaining and grieving therefore, and above all from thinking that you are not pleasing to God because you are being continually and violently tempted or subjected to severe trials. *Because thou wast acceptable to God*, said the angel to Tobias *it was necessary that temptation should prove thee* (1). These thoughts should sustain your courage, and fill you with joy in the midst of severe trials.

COLLOQUY. With St. Anthony the anchorite, renowned amongst all the Saints for the great number, severity and violence of the temptations he experienced, and which contributed so greatly to his spiritual progress.

(1) *Tobias*, xii, 13.

MEDITATION VI.

JESUS PROCLAIMED AND EXTOLLED

BY ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST, HIS PRECURSOR.

I *Prelude*. See St. John the Baptist pointing out Jesus who is coming to be baptised.

II. *Prelude*. Ask for self-forgiveness so that you may seek nothing but the glory of God.

POINT I. — ST. JOHN POINTS OUT JESUS TO THE PEOPLE.

CONSIDERATIONS. After leaving the desert Jesus went to seek and comfort His holy Precursor who was at that time suffering grievous persecution, aroused by envy. When St. John saw his Divine Master he pointed Him out to the people around him, and said : *This is he of whom I said : After me there cometh a man who is preferred before me : because he was before me* (1), *the latchet of whose shoe I am not worthy to loose* (2). *...he it is that baptiseth with the Holy Ghost* (3) *this is the Son of God* (4). *He must increase but I must decrease* (5).

APPLICATIONS. What do we see here? A man justly venerated for his sublime sanctity who humbles himself and desires to be forgotten by all men, so that their admiration and praise may be given exclusively to the Saviour. A man who is truly humble acts in this way ; he humbles himself so that God may be exalted. He is silent regarding his own merits, but he loves to praise others. It is to these men who are

(1) John, i, 30. — (2) Id., 27. — (3) Id., 33. — (4) Id., 34. — (5) Id., iii, 30.

truly humble that God loves to communicate Himself, and to whom He gives His consolations and favours in abundance. You complain that you are deprived of them; is it not perhaps because God sees that you have the characteristics of a pride which seeks appreciation in everything, and the estimation of the world, often, it may be at the expense of others by depreciating their merit?

AFFECTIONS. Earnestly ask for deep humility united to an ardent desire to see God blessed and glorified by all men.

RESOLUTIONS: Never to speak of myself. — To speak well of others, and at least not to expose their faults unless it be necessary.

POINT II. — HE CALLS JESUS THE LAMB OF GOD.

CONSIDERATIONS. When John saw Jesus, he said to the people : *Behold the lamb of God, behold him who taketh away the sin of the world* (1). Jesus Christ is called the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world, first, because He is the true and only victim worthy to be sacrificed to God, the only One capable of expiating the sins of the world; — secondly, because His patience in bearing with us, and forgiving us, and in waiting our return to the right path, is truly that of the lamb; — thirdly, because as a lamb suffers itself to be slain without uttering a sound, so there will be nothing but words of forgiveness on His lips for His executioners. It was with this name and these characteristics that Isaias depicted the promised Messias, and His Precursor recalls

(1) John, i, 29.

them here in order to make Him known and accepted by the Jews.

APPLICATIONS. Show yourself a worthy disciple of the Lamb of God in these three respects by uniting the sacrifice of yourself to that of Jesus, by the practice of mortification; by proving meek, patient and charitable towards all, even towards those who contradict you, or who try to do you harm; by offering yourself with all your heart to Jesus as a victim of love, desiring to take part in good words which will procure His glory and the salvation of souls, even should they meet with disapproval, censure or derision. Are these your dispositions?

AFFECTIONS. Often repeat this beautiful aspiration of a fervent Christian: May I die for love of Thee, O Jesus, Who didst die for love of me!

RESOLUTIONS. To be afraid of transgressing against the longanimity of the Divine Lamb; to take Him as a model in meekness and in forgetting insults.

POINT III. — HE SEEKS DISCIPLES FOR JESUS.

CONSIDERATIONS. St. John had gathered round him a large number of fervent disciples by his preaching and by his wonderful sanctity. This might have tempted him to vanity and ambition, but the Saints are indifferent to their own glory; in all things seeking only the honour of God and the good of souls. St. John gives us a striking proof of this for instead of endeavouring to increase the number of his disciples, he made every effort to detach them from himself in order to unite them to Our Lord; he took every opportunity of praising Him, and exalting Him.

APPLICATIONS. True zeal does not fear to be overshadowed by the brilliant success of others; it rejoices at the good that is done, whoever may do it. False zeal on the contrary, feels a secret jealousy at the good done by others, especially when it finds that it is surpassed in success and reputation; a jealousy which too often finds expression in indirect blame and malicious criticism. This shocks you, but is your soul entirely free from such feelings? Do your words give any proof of this?

COLLOQUY. With the holy Precursor of Jesus.

MEDITATION VII.

JESUS CALLS HIS DISCIPLES.

- I. *Prelude.* See Jesus amongst His first four disciples.
 II. *Prelude.* Ask for grace to be always amongst His most fervent disciples.

POINT I. — THE CHOICE OF THE FIRST FOUR DISCIPLES
 OF THE DIVINE SAVIOUR.

CONSIDERATIONS. After having preached alone for some months, according to the custom of the prophets, Jesus sought to have some disciples. The first came to Him through His holy Precursor. The fact is recorded in this way : *The next day again John stood, and two of his disciples. And beholding Jesus walking, he saith : Behold the lamb of God. And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus... who said to him, Rabbi (which is to say, being interpreted, Master) where dwellest thou? He saith to them : Come and see. They came... and they staid with him that day...*

And Andrew, the brother of Simon Peter was one of the two who had heard of John and followed him. He findeth first his brother Simon and saith to him : We have found the Messias which is, being interpreted, the Christ. And he brought him to Jesus. And Jesus taking upon him, said : Thou art Simon the son of Jona : thou shalt be called Cephas, which is, being interpreted, Peter. On the following day he would go forth into Galilee, and he findeth Philip. And Jesus saith to him : Follow me (1).

APPLICATIONS. Andrew, John, Simon or Peter, and Philip, these then were the four privileged beings whom the Saviour of the world chose as His first disciples. Their vocation seemed to be due to chance; but God had decreed it from all eternity. It may seem to you too that your vocation to Christianity which is your greatest happiness is due merely to fortuitous circumstances, such as your birth of Catholic parents; but with the eyes of faith you will see that it is the result of a decree of God's eternal predilection for you.

AFFECTIONS. Ask for humble and profound gratitude, give expression to it from the depths of your heart.

RESOLUTIONS. To prove my gratitude by an ever increasing fidelity to the holy Will of God.

POINT II. — THE CHARACTER OF THESE FIRST DISCIPLES.

CONSIDERATIONS. What class of men were the first disciples whom Jesus called to follow Him?

(1) John, i, 35-43.

They were good men, hardworking and pious, but of humble extraction, who lived by fishing; natives of Galilee, a country despised by the Jews; unknown and ignorant men for whom the world in general had nothing but disdain and contempt. Why did the Son of God choose men of this kind? First, to enlighten the world which can see nothing great nor estimable in anything but riches, dignity and renown; — secondly, to exalt poverty and simplicity, united to honesty and virtue; — thirdly, ever to preserve the disciples who are called to such a high destiny, from temptations of pride; but above all to convince the world that the foundation and triumph of the Church were not the work of men. — All this is revealed by the teaching of the Apostle St. Paul (1).

APPLICATIONS. Do not lose sight of these motives for the choice of Jesus, and if you have been born in the midst of wealth or are of noble family, you will not take any pride in it. If on the contrary, you are of ordinary or even humble and poor extraction, you will not be ashamed if you remember that in every condition of life it is virtue alone which makes a man meritorious in the sight of God.

AFFECTIONS. Admire, praise and exalt the wonderful economy of Providence in the choice of evangelical labourers.

RESOLUTIONS. Never to think of what our position in the world has been or is, except to become more humble in our own eyes, and more grateful towards God.

(1) *1 Corin.*, I, 27-28.

POINT III. — THE MANNER IN WHICH THEY WERE CALLED.

CONSIDERATIONS. The first four disciples of Jesus were not called in the same way, nor permitted at first to follow Him definitely, as seen in the vocation of Peter and Andrew. At first, they only spent a short time with Jesus, as though to become acquainted with Him, and His mode of life; it was a kind of first probation or novitiate; afterwards when they followed Him in His evangelical career, they were more closely united to Him, but still without the intention or the settled determination of leaving their parents. Finally, when they were certain of their vocation, and firmly established in the knowledge and love of Jesus Christ, they joined Him irrevocably, after renouncing everything for ever.

APPLICATIONS. When we reflect carefully on these different stages through which the Son of God made those pass whom He called to follow Him, whom He invited to consecrate themselves to Him for ever, we are surprised, and at the same time we rejoice to find after nineteen centuries have passed, that prelates of the Church and Superiors of religious orders still follow faithfully the rules formed by their Divine Master in receiving candidates to the priesthood and to religious profession. These thoughts should strengthen our appreciation and love of our faith, and our resolution to live a holy life in it.

COLLOQUY. With our Divine Lord to whom we are indebted for all the blessings we possess.
— Ask for grace to use them in a holy way.

MEDITATION VIII.

THE CONVERSATION
BETWEEN JESUS AND NATHANAEL.

I. *Prelude.* Hear Jesus speaking to Nathanael.

II. *Prelude.* Ask for the sincerity and simplicity which Jesus praised in Nathanael.

POINT I. — NATHANAEL'S PREJUDICE.

CONSIDERATIONS. No sooner did Philip know Jesus than he hastened to make Him known also to his friend Nathanael, who is believed to be the same as St. Bartholomew : *Philip findeth Nathanael, and saith to him : We have found him of whom Moses in the law and the prophets did write, Jesus the son of Joseph of Nazareth* (1). The greatest happiness was to fall to the share of Nathanael, that of knowing the Saviour of the world, and of being admitted to His friend-ship. But a fatal prejudice almost deprived him for ever of this privilege. He merely answered the advances of his friend contemptuously saying : *Can anything of good come from Nazareth* (2)? and refused to take any further steps. It was only when urged by his friend, that he finally consented to judge for himself. For Philip said to him : *Come and see* (3) — before condemning Him.

APPLICATIONS. How many men even in our day are kept away from Jesus and from His Church and the Sacraments, through deplorable prejudice. Pity them; they deserve compassion.

(1) John, i, 45. — (2) Id., 46. — (3) Id., 46.

Yet are all devout people always free from prejudice? Perhaps you are recommended to read some spiritual work which would help you, but you are prejudiced against the author and you refuse. — Perhaps your spiritual director advises some devotions which should be a great help to your progress; but you have been prejudiced against him; he is too particular etc. You do not practise them, and consequently deprive yourself of very great blessings. Is not that giving way to prejudice? Examine yourself carefully, for you may be surprised to find that you have not always been free from prejudices, and that you still have many.

AFFECTIONS. Ask for grace to practise this advice of the Apostle faithfully : *Prove all things : hold fast that which is good* (1).

RESOLUTIONS. To be on my guard against imputations and prejudices.

POINT II. — THE STRAIGHTFORWARDNESS OF NATHANAEI.

CONSIDERATIONS. The contempt cast by Nathanael on the Nazarenes descended on Jesus. Nevertheless, He did not take offence because He saw that Nathanael in his innermost heart was without malice, and sought to know the truth. Far from reproaching him, He praised him : *Jesus saw Nathanael coming to him*, these are the Evangelist's words, — *and he saith of him : Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no guile* (2). Happy the man who merited that praise from the lips of Jesus : Happy also the Christian who bears witness that in all things he goes straight to God in the

(1) 1 Thess., v. 21. — (2) John, i, 47.

simplicity of his heart, having no other intention, no other desire than to please Him. How different to the one who is more occupied with the thought of appearing virtuous before men than with being so in reality in the sight of God.

APPLICATIONS. Which of the two do you resemble? It is a question of the utmost importance. It deserves a serious and deep examination, especially since we can easily deceive ourselves, as pride tends to make all men seek their own interests, and the appreciation of the world.

AFFECTIONS. Beg Our Lord to make you understand the folly of being satisfied with the appearance of virtue, and with the praise gained by hypocrisy or dissimulation.

RESOLUTIONS. In my examinations I shall pay particular heed to the sincerity of my intentions, and to the motives which make me act, especially when in the presence of others.

POINT III. — NATHANAEAL'S PROFESSION OF FAITH.

CONSIDERATIONS. Nathanael, surprised at the description which Jesus gave of him without ever having seen him, took the liberty of saying, with the candour which was so natural to him : *Whence knowest thou me? Jesus answered and said to him : Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee* (1). At these words the eyes of the disciple were opened; and he was convinced that He Whose sight penetrated the most distant and hidden things was not an ordinary mortal, and

(1) John, 1, 48.

he exclaimed in accents of lively faith : *Rabbi, thou art the Son of God, thou art the king of Israel* (the Messias) (1).

APPLICATIONS. Let us seek God, like Nathanael, with simplicity of heart, and He will reveal Himself to us ; from the heights of heaven He will pour down on us new light and ever more abundant graces, and we shall realise the truth of these words : *His communication is with the simple* (2), and of these other words : *How good is God... to them that are of a right heart* (3).

COLLOQUY. With your guardian angel who in all things does the will of God with such sincerity of intention.

MEDITATION IX.

THE MANIFESTATION OF JESUS

BY HIS FIRST MIRACLE

AT THE MARRIAGE AT CANA IN GALILEE.

I. *Prelude.* See Jesus and Mary amongst the happy guests at Cana.

II. *Prelude.* Ask God to perform miracles of grace within us.

POINT I. — THE PRESENCE OF JESUS AND MARY
AT THE WEDDING-FEAST.

CONSIDERATIONS. *And the third day after the meeting with Nathanael there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee, a small city near Nazareth ; and the mother of Jesus was there. And Jesus also was invited, and his disciples, to the marriage* (4). We are here tempted to ask

(1) John, i, 49. — (2) Prov., iii, 32. — (3) Ps. LXXII, 1.
— (4) John, iv, 1-2.

ourselves under what circumstances or for what reason our Divine Lord desired to honour this humble wedding-feast with His Presence, rather than that of some wealthy person of high rank. Interpreters answer that it was in order to fulfil a duty of courtesy and friendship towards the family or near relatives of His holy Mother, for it appears that the bridegroom of this feast was no other than Simon the Canaanite, a son of Cleophas and a brother of St. Joseph, who afterwards became one of the twelve Apostles; — secondly, in order to show His esteem for virtue in a humble rank of life; — thirdly, to raise in the opinion of the world the marriage contract which God instituted from the cradle of the human race, and which the Son of God was to elevate to the dignity of a Sacrament.

APPLICATIONS. Three practical conclusions are drawn from this consideration. First, that it is not in any way contrary to Christian perfection to conform among your relations and friends, to all the duties of friendship and courtesy; — secondly, that our esteem of men should be regulated, not according to riches and rank, but according to the merit of virtue; — thirdly, that marriage having been not only honoured, but exalted by Our Lord to the dignity of a Sacrament, we should prepare ourselves for it by a holy life if we desire to find happiness therein in time and eternity.

AFFECTIONS. Rejoice with the guests at Cana for having Jesus and Mary in their midst. Rejoice in the thought that by invoking these holy names frequently you can be with them in spirit, and share in the happiness of the guests of Cana.

RESOLUTIONS. I shall acquire the habit of taking my meals in the sight of God, or, what will perhaps help me more, in the company of Jesus and Mary.

POINT II. — MARY'S SOLICITUDE FOR HER HOSTS.

CONSIDERATIONS. *And the wine failing, the Mother of Jesus saith to him : They have no wine* (1). Let us consider two things carefully here — the provident goodness of the Blessed Virgin, and the confidence with which she addresses her Divine Son. She perceives that the small quantity of wine, (the ordinary beverage of the country) set apart by their hosts for the feast, is insufficient, and that they will be put to inconvenience. At once on her own initiative, she speaks of it to her Son in these words : *They have no wine*. She does not deem it necessary to make any further remark since she has such perfect confidence in Him ; and though He only seemed to answer with a refusal saying : *Woman, what is it to me and to thee* (2) ? *my hour to manifest my power by miracles is not yet come*. None the less she said to the waiters : *Whatsoever he shall say to you, do ye* (3).

APPLICATIONS. Here once more we see how interested Our Lady is in all that concerns us,

(1) John, ii, 3.

(2) Others translate thus : What is it for thee and for me ? (what of this want of wine, this privation ?) Jesus does not give the name of Mother here to the Blessed Virgin, so that the guests might understand that it is not as men or the Son of Mary that He will perform miracles, but as the eternal Son of God. Besides, the word woman has not in Hebrew the common signification attached to it by us.

(3) John, ii, 4-5.

even to the smallest details, and how much power she has with God who desires that we should receive all through her intercession. Your confidence in Mary should be boundless, for she can dispose of the infinite power of her Divine Son. If you have obtained little considering your petitions, it is because your confidence has not been great enough.

AFFECTIONS. Pray for us, O holy Mother of God, that we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

RESOLUTIONS. To thank the Blessed Virgin often for the blessings she has obtained for you without your knowledge.

POINT III. — THE MIRACLE PERFORMED BY JESUS OUT OF CONSIDERATION FOR MARY, HIS HOLY MOTHER.

CONSIDERATIONS. Mary's expectations were not disappointed. Jesus anticipated the appointed time of the manifestation of His power, out of consideration for her, and performed His first public miracle by changing water into wine, the water which filled *the six water-pots of stone... containing two or three measures a-piece* (1). And the Evangelist adds : *And he manifested his glory, and his disciples believed in him* (2).

APPLICATIONS. The miracle which Jesus performed for the favoured guests at Cana. He repeats every day for us in a yet more excellent way, when in the Holy sacrifice He changes the wine into His own Blood, and affirms that *he that... drinketh my blood, hath everlasting life* (3). Let us show our gratitude for so much love by approaching the altar where we receive

(1) John, ii, 6. — (2) Id., 11. — (3) Id., vi, 55.

the Blood of Christ united to His Divine Flesh, with the utmost reverence and fervour. Have we approached in that way?

COLLOQUY. With Our Lord Jesus Christ. Acknowledge and adore Him as the Master of the elements of nature. — Ask Him to change our hearts which are so cold and languid, into ardent and compassionate hearts.

MEDITATION X.

JESUS LEAVES HIS HOLY MOTHER.

HE URGES HIS DISCIPLES TO FOLLOW HIS EXAMPLE
BY LEAVING ALL THINGS.

I. *Prelude.* Hear Jesus saying to you : *Follow me* (1).

II. *Prelude.* Ask for an ardent desire to make constant progress in the imitation of Jesus Christ.

POINT I. — JESUS LEAVES HIS MOTHER.
HIS PERFECT RENUNCIATION

CONSIDERATIONS. Jesus after leaving Cana, *went down to Capharnaum, He and his mother, and his brethren* (2) *and his disciples :*

(1) Matt., ix, 9.

(2) The Hebrews gave the name of brethren to first cousins. This according to general opinion, is what the four brethren were by consanguinity or affinity in relationship to Jesus Christ : James (apostle called the less, author of the Catholic Epistle) : Joseph, one of the seventy-two disciples ; Simon (apostle, called the Canaanite) ; Jude or Thaddeus (apostle, author of the Canonical Epistle) whose two sisters were Mary and Salome ; all six of them being the children of Cleophas or Alpheus, who was a brother of St. Joseph and a son of Jacob, St. Anne's brother. — Salome, married to Zebedee, was the mother of the two apostles, James, called the Greater (because he was called before his uncle) renowned in Spain, martyred in Jerusalem under

and they remained there not many days (1). These words : *they remained there not many days*, are significant. They were in fact, the last days Our Lord spent under the same roof with his holy Mother and His relations. From this time forward it can be said that He had no longer either a Mother, or home, or anything that could bind Him to the world. Thenceforward He was nothing more than the Son of Man, the Messenger of His heavenly Father, as He expresses it, dedicated wholly and exclusively to His Divine mission, continually moving from one place to another, wherever the glory of God and the salvation of souls called Him.

APPLICATIONS. Everything is unstable in the life, and it may happen that your portion in life, through happy now, may be changed at no distant future. Death may strike some heavy blows around you, and bring you sad bereavement; reverses of fortune, discords in the family may force you to change your home suddenly, to live far from those you love. If some day you have to go through these hard trials, make an act of resignation to the most holy and adorable Will of God. That act will obtain for you an immense increase of glory and happiness in heaven.

AFFECTIONS. Ask for perfect detachment from all that passes away with the short span of life,

Herod; — and John the Evangelist. — The three Maries mentioned at the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, are the two sisters, Mary mother of James the less, and Mary Salome, and Mary Magdalen. These details will be useful henceforth in elucidating several of the meditations.

(1) John, ii, 12.

in order to aspire with more fervour to the imperishable blessings of heaven.

RESOLUTIONS. When temptations of weariness and despair overwhelm me, I will confront them with encouraging thoughts of faith.

POINT II. — JESUS URGES ANDREW AND PETER TO FOLLOW HIS EXAMPLE IN MAKING THIS RENUNCIATION.

CONSIDERATIONS. After giving an example of the most perfect renunciation of all natural affections in order to dedicate Himself exclusively to His Divine mission, Jesus urges the same renunciation on those disciples who were destined to share that mission with Him, and to perpetuate it after Him. *Jesus walking by the sea of Galilee, says St. Matthew, saw two brethren, Simon who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea... And he saith to them : Come ye after me, and I will make you to be fishers of men. And they immediately leaving their nets, followed him* (1), breaking all family ties and relationships; renouncing all property and their own liberty, determined to imitate the voluntary poverty, the perfect chastity, and the labour of their Divine Master.

APPLICATIONS. Here we find the first example of the practice of the Evangelical Counsels which are so opposed to the prejudices of the world and the inclinations of nature. Who would ever have embraced a mode of life which implies so many sacrifices, if a God made Man had not been the first to do it? Indeed, if the first disciples of Our Divine Lord embraced it so promptly, it

(1) Matt., iv, 18-26.

must be attributed to His example no less than to the unction of grace. If you wish to bring others effectively to the practice of virtue, and to follow your good advice, preach to them through example. Have you done it?

AFFECTIONS. Ask for grace never to deserve the reproach made by Jesus to the Scribes : *They say, and do not* (1).

RESOLUTIONS. To prevent that censure I will watch over my words and my actions, so that I may be able to say to those over whom I have authority what my Divine Master says to me : *I have given you an example* (2).

POINT III. — JESUS URGES JAMES AND JOHN TO MAKE THE SAME RENUNCIATION.

CONSIDERATIONS. *And going on from thence, he saw other two brethren James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother in a ship... mending their nets : and he called them. And they forthwith left their nets and father, and followed him* (3).

APPLICATIONS. Admire the generosity and wonderful docility to grace both in the father and his two sons. There is neither reluctance on the one side, nor complaint nor opposition on the other, yet the sacrifice demanded was great and very hard to nature. Imitate this generosity; correspond promptly to the inspirations of grace, and you will make rapid progress in Christian perfection, and will amass an abundance of merit for eternity.

COLLOQUY. With the four first disciples of Jesus, or with Our Divine Lord Himself.

(1) Matt., xxiii. 3. — (2) John, xiii, 15. — (3) Matt., iv, 21-22.

MEDITATION XI.

The first Passover, and the first year
of Jesus Christ's preaching.

THE ZEAL OF JESUS

FOR THE HOUSE OF GOD HIS FATHER (1).

I. *Prelude.* See Jesus scourge in hand, driving out the profaners of the temple.

II. *Prelude.* Ask for great zeal for the glory of God.

POINT I. — THE ARDOUR OF CHRIST'S ZEAL.

CONSIDERATIONS. *And the pasch of the Jews was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem* (2). But He went there this year, no longer simply as an adorer, but as a Master and Reformer. He desired to make Himself known as such by a striking act of authority : *And he found in the temple, says St. John, them that sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the changers of money sitting. And when he had made as it were a scourge of little cords, he drove them all out of the temple, the sheep also and the oxen, and the money of the changers He poured out, and the tables he overthrew* (3). His intention was to destroy a sacrilegious, scandalous and inveterate abuse which had been legitimised in a certain way by sordid interest; for this reason Jesus manifested

(1) It is from this Passover, commonly known as the first, (25th March) that the commencement of the three years of Christ's preaching is dated. About the same time ended the mission of St. John the Baptist, His Precursor, who was cast into prison by Herod-Antipas, the son of Herod who massacred the Innocents.

(2) John, ii, 13. — (3) Id., 14-15.

outwardly the most intense indignation and anger, though there was no change in the serenity of His soul.

APPLICATIONS. By this we see that the manifestation of just indignation is not only not a sin, but often an act of virtue and a necessity. *Be angry, and sin not*, says St. Paul the Apostle (1). It is sometimes a necessity with our inferiors, in order to make them realise the gravity of their faults, and to inspire them with a horror of them. It is a necessity in some cases, in regard to ourselves. Perhaps for too long you may have indulged in some sin, the source of secret remorse or of scandal? — it must be ended. Therefore arm yourself with righteous anger against yourself, and take in your hand the scourge of Divine justice with the determination that you will not lay it down until you have made full satisfaction.

AFFECTIONS. Ask for grace to be always master of self, even when aroused to righteous indignation.

RESOLUTIONS. I must not mistake outbreaks of temper or of wounded self-love, for zeal.

POINT II. — THE DISCRETION OF CHRIST'S ZEAL.

CONSIDERATIONS. *And to them that sold doves*, the Gospel relates that *he said : Take these things hence* (2). Why did Our Lord moderate the violence and severity of His zeal towards these small merchants? Because they were poor and ignorant, and therefore less guilty than the others. Moreover, if He had acted with them as He had done with the first, He would have

(1) *Ephes.*, iv, 26. — (2) *John*, ii, 16.

exposed them to the loss of their only means of livelihood, which was repugnant to the infinite loving-kindness of Jesus. He therefore only frightened them without hurting them.

APPLICATIONS. Learn from this that the fervour of your zeal, however legitimate it may be, should be regulated by wise discretion and moderated by charity. Have you not often failed in this respect, and must you not attribute the want of success attending your good works partly to this? Indiscreet zeal does more harm than good.

AFFECTIONS. Contemplate with love, in the Person and action of Jesus, the marvellous harmony between His severity and His gentleness. Ask for grace to conform your zeal to that of your Divine Model.

RESOLUTIONS. To be on my guard against the first feelings of indignation. — To reflect before acting, above all before an important action.

POINT III. — THE JUSTIFICATION OF CHRIST'S ZEAL.

CONSIDERATIONS. Our Lord was pleased to justify the severity of His conduct by these words : *Make not the house of my Father a house of traffic* (1). How many reflections should be aroused by these words in the minds of Christians ! If Jesus Christ considered the traffic done in the temple with those things which were required for the sacrifices, a profanation deserving the most severe punishment, how must He regard the public and secret sins by which our churches, infinitely more holy than the Temple of Jerusalem, are profaned ?

(1) John, ii, 16.

With what inexorable severity will He not punish them some day!

APPLICATIONS. If you are zealous for the glory of God's House, try to make amends by exterior respect, and by your devotion in that holy place for the insults proffered there to the Infinite Majesty of God. Perhaps you yourself have been wanting in reverence; perhaps you have to reproach yourself with reprehensible negligences or liberties in your manner or in your demeanour. If this be the case you have then a double reason for striving to make amends for the insult proffered to God in His Sanctuary.

COLLOQUY. With the angels who are appointed to watch over our churches and oratories.

MEDITATION XII.

ON ZEAL FOR THE GLORY OF GOD.

I. *Prelude.* Hear the Apostle saying : *Do all to the Glory of God* (1),

II. *Prelude.* Ask for an ardent zeal for God's glory.

POINT I. — THE NATURE OF ZEAL FOR THE GLORY OF GOD.

CONSIDERATIONS. The extrinsic glory of God inasmuch as He desired to manifest Himself by the work of creation consists in that man, endowed with understandig, and alone capable of knowing the Author of his being and the innumerable wonders of the universe, should constantly refer all honour to God alone with profound admiration and adoration, and an entire offering of himself. Zeal for God's glory

(1) 1 *Corin.*, x, 31.

consists therefore in an efficacious desire to inspire others with these feelings, and if possible, to fill the hearts of all men with them.

APPLICATIONS. What can be more just and more in accordance with the primary ideas of equity, than this zeal for God's glory? Every well disposed child has naturally the glory and interest of his father at heart, and God is the Father of us all; we are pre-eminently indebted to him for life and all the blessings of life. Consequently, ought not zeal for God's glory to be the most natural and dearest interest of man? Sould there not rise from all hearts instinctively a constant hymn of adoration, praise and blessing towards heaven? But unfortunately it is not so. The truth is that in these days, the greater number of men still merit the reproach addressed by Moses to the elect people : *Thou hast forsaken the God that begot thee, and hast forgotten the Lord that created thee* (1). Do you merit that reproach in some way? Are you not usually more occupied and solicitous in thinking of self than of God? More sensitive to the injuries done to you than those which are being continually offered to God?

AFFECTIONS. Grieve for the blindness of men. — Lament your own want of feeling. — Ask for zeal for God's glory and self-forgetfulness.

RESOLUTIONS. I shall always try to say these words with great fervour : *Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost.*

POINT II. — THE EXCELLENCE OF ZEAL FOR THE GLORY OF GOD.

CONSIDERATIONS. It is impossible to imagine

(1) *Deut.*, xxxii, 18.

anything more exalted or nobler than the sublime end intended by God for all His works. That end is no other than Himself and His glory, say the Scriptures : *The Lord hath made all things for himself* (1). This was the unmistakable and definite end God had in view when He *created man to His own image* (2). *I have created him for my glory* (3). From this is drawn the conclusion, or rather the precept of the Apostle : *Whether you eat or drink, or whatsoever else you do, do all to the glory of God* (4). What a privilege for man to be able to act in all things and always for the end intended by God !

APPLICATIONS. Let us endeavour to be continually fulfilling our mission, the glorious mission of promoting the glory of God, the greatest glory of God. To promote it first in ourselves by paying homage to God incessantly for all that we are, and all that we possess, and by seeking to know in all things His holy Will, with the determination never to oppose it voluntarily through the least infidelity. Then by promoting it in others by undertaking to make God known and served according to the measure of our influence ; by supporting as far as we can, all good works by our co operation, or at least by our prayers, Communions, or the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. To what extent have we been true to our mission ? Let us make up for our indifference by redoubling our zeal.

AFFECTIONS. Let us ask God to make us docile and powerful instruments for His glory.

(1) *Prov.*, xvi, 4. — (2) *Gen.*, i, 27. — (3) *Isaius*, xliii, 7.
— (4) *I Corin.*, x, 31.

RESOLUTIONS. To esteem knowledge and reputation solely in so far as they may help us to promote the glory of God.

POINT III. — THE MERIT OF ZEAL FOR THE GLORY OF GOD.

CONSIDERATIONS. If there be nothing more excellent and more divine than works inspired by zeal for the glory of God, it follows that there is nothing more meritorious in the sight of God, nor anything that can procure greater glory for us in eternity, according to His own words : *Whosoever shall glorify me, him shall I glorify* (1).

APPLICATIONS. These thoughts should make you seize with joy and eagerness every opportunity for exercising zeal for the glory of God. These opportunities will not be wanting, for you will find them on every side, even without leaving your home, in helping by your good example, your children, your subordinates, your brothers, sisters, and all those who live with you, towards perfection, and by helping them in this way to glorify God in themselves.

COLLOQUY. With St. Francis Xavier, admirable for the greatness and the triumphs of his zeal.

MEDITATION XIII.

NICODEMUS GOES TO SEEK JESUS

DURING THE NIGHT.

I. *Prelude.* See Nicodemus, a man respected for his age and authority, humbly questioning and listening to Jesus.

II. *Prelude.* Beg Jesus to deign ever to make the strength of your will correspond to the light of your understanding.

(1) 1 *Kings*, ii, 30.

POINT I. — THE COURAGE AND COWARDICE OF NICODEMUS.

CONSIDERATIONS. The more than human authority which Jesus had shown in driving the crowd of profaners from the temple, had created a great sensation in Jerusalem. *Many*, says St. John, *believed in his name, seeing his signs which he did* (1). *And there was there a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews* (2). He was an honest seeker after truth. He thought he saw in Jesus a messenger from heaven, and felt compelled to go to him for instruction. But in order to accomplish this humble undertaking it was necessary for him to rise above human respect, and to brave the anger of the princes of the nation who had already protested fiercely against Jesus, and had denounced Him as an Nazarene impostor who deceived ignorant people. Nicodemus had the courage to overcome all these obstacles, but not without a lamentable mingling of cowardice; that he might escape observation, he *came to Jesus by night*, says St. John (3).

APPLICATIONS. Is not this combination of courage and cowardice which you see and blame in Nicodemus a faithful representation of your own conduct? You have had the courage to declare that you are on God's side, to practise piety openly, and nevertheless how often are you unfaithful to your duties through cowardice, human respect or lukewarmness? May this cease henceforth. With the assistance of

(1) John, ii, 23. — (2) Id., iii, 1. — (3) Id., 2.

grace be more consistent, and show more strength in all your conduct.

AFFECTIONS. Confess all your weaknesses, inconsistencies and infidelities before God. — Humble yourself and ask forgiveness for them.

RESOLUTIONS I will try to learn the chief cause of the weaknesses with which I have to reproach myself, so that I may not be guilty of them in future.

POINT II. — THE ENLIGHTENMENT AND DOUBT
OF NICODEMUS.

CONSIDERATIONS. Approaching Jesus, Nicodemus said to Him : *Rabbi, we know that thou art come a teacher from God ; for no man can do these signs which thou dost, unless God be with him* (1). This profession of faith reveals that Nicodemus was far more enlightened than any of his colleagues in the Great Council ; nevertheless this light was still enveloped in darkness. He did not see the Messiah promised by the prophets in the Person of Jesus Christ, he misapprehended, or but imperfectly interpreted Our Lord's doctrine to such an extent as to merit this reproach : *Art thou a master in Israel, and knowest not these things* (2) ?

APPLICATIONS. You are not lacking in this light which concerns the excellence and practice of Christian perfection ; perhaps you know enough to be a master in Israel and to teach others. But when you have to conform your conduct in certain matters, to this light, darkness seems suddenly to envelope your mind ; the reasons which made you form certain

(1) John, iii, 2. — (2) Id., 10.

resolutions, such as rising at a certain time, or listening to advice or a reproof silently or without excusing yourself, or doing some act of mortification or of charity, etc., no longer appear so conclusive and you abandon your resolutions. Have you not noticed this contrast of light and darkness, of generosity and weakness in yourself? It is an additional reason for humbling yourself before God, and for being distrustful of self.

AFFECTIONS. With these feelings hold converse with God.

RESOLUTIONS. To alter none of our previous resolutions when we are in darkness or desolation.

POINT III. — THE GOOD-WILL AND PROCRASTINATION
OF NICODEMUS.

CONSIDERATIONS. Nicodemus goes away from the conversation with Jesus a different man. His mind is illuminated by the most radiant light of faith, and his heart is inflamed with love for the Saviour of the world. He had become His faithful and fervent disciple. Yet he does not hasten to prove it by any noticeable acts. We never see him among the disciples who follow Jesus. It is only two years later, at the death of the Saviour that he distinguishes himself by a heroic act of piety and devotion by going boldly to Pilate to ask for the Body of his Divine Master, and by providing a splendid sepulchre for Him.

APPLICATIONS. Perhaps you also have been slow in distinguishing yourself in God's service in spite of a certain amount of good-will. Perhaps you have not yet done anything

great or heroic for Him. However, do not let that discourage you. Nicodemus redeemed his past inactivity through his heroism, and was found worthy to be numbered among the Saints. (*Martyrol.* : August 3rd.) Do the same and God will have mercy on you.

COLLOQUY. With Blessed Nicodemus.

MEDITATION XIV.

THE JEALOUSY

OF ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST'S DISCIPLES.

I. *Prelude.* Hear St. John instructing his disciples who are animated with mistaken zeal for his glory.

II. *Prelude.* Ask for self-forgetfulness and an ardent zeal for God's glory.

POINT I. — THE JEALOUSY OF ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST'S DISCIPLES.

CONSIDERATIONS. *After these things, says St. John, that is, after the conversions and miracles performed in Jerusalem, Jesus and his disciples came into the land of Judea : and there he abode with them, and baptised (1)... Though Jesus himself did not baptise, but his disciples (2).* This act of zeal and the success accompanying it, aroused jealousy in the hearts of St. John the Baptist's disciples; they went to him and complained : *Rabbi, he that was with thee beyond the Jordan, to whom thou gavest testimony, behold he baptiseth, and all men come to him (3).*

APPLICATIONS. This fact related in the Gospel proves that even good men are not always free

(1) John, iii, 22. — (2) Id., iv, 2. — (3) Id., iii, 26.

from envy, and that this passion is sometimes hidden under the appearance of zeal. The zeal of St. John's disciples for their master's glory made them envy the success of Jesus and His disciples. Instead of rejoicing they seemed to resent it. Does anything of this kind ever happen with you? When good is done by others who dedicate themselves to the same kind of good works as yourself, or when you find that you have been surpassed and eclipsed by the success of those you had accepted as helpers, do you rejoice in the Lord? Do you not, on the contrary, experience a secret feeling of jealousy? Is it not proved by your words of blame and criticism?

AFFECTIONS. Detest jealousy at the feet of Jesus. — Ask for grace never to succumb to it.

RESOLUTIONS. To withstand temptations of jealousy with the words of St. Paul : *So that... Christ be preached, no matter by whom; in this also I rejoice, yea, and will rejoice (1).*

POINT II.

THE DISINTERESTEDNESS OF ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST.

CONSIDERATIONS. St. John's disciples expected to find that he shared their feelings, but they were wholly mistaken. There is no envy in the hearts of the Saints; detached from all self-interest, they forget self, and seek only the glory of God. This disinterestedness was remarkable in the Precursor of the Messiah. His only reply to his disciples' complaints was to exalt Jesus and depreciate himself : *He that cometh from above, he said, is above all (2). I am sent*

(1) *Philipp.*, i, 18. — (2) *John*, iii, 31.

before Him (1). I have heard His voice. This my joy therefore is fulfilled (2).

APPLICATIONS. How rare amongst men is this self-forgetfulness, and this perfect detachment! We are surprised and charmed to find them in an ordinary Christian, but we have a right to expect them in those who are reputed to be good. Do you possess them — to what extent? If they are firmly rooted in you, you will praise sincerely, and gladly hear praise given to those who are more highly esteemed in the opinion of men, by reason of extraordinary gifts of God. If on the contrary you are grieved at the success of others or when they are more praised than you, you must conclude that you are far from being dead to vain-glory and to seeking your own satisfaction.

AFFECTIONS. Ask for grace to die ever more and more to self-love from which arise envy, slander, human respect, and forgetfulness of God's interests.

RESOLUTIONS. To say often with the Apostle : *To... God be honour and glory for ever and ever (3).*

POINT III. — THE ABNEGATION OF ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST.

CONSIDERATIONS. *He must increase but I must decrease (4).* St. John's disinterestedness reached an entire abnegation of self. Not only did he lose sight of self in the good he did, and rejoice for the greater good done by Jesus; but he also desired fervently to see this good increase in such a way that he himself might be forgotten and disdained by the world.

(1) John, iii, 28. — (2) Id., 29. — (3) 1 Timothy, i, 17. — (4) John, iii, 30.

APPLICATIONS. If you wish to triumph completely over temptations of vain-glory and envy, you should like St. John subdue your pride in such a way as to aim constantly at an entire abnegation of self, and a desire to be forgotten and of no account among men, so that God alone may be the object of their esteem and love. What degree of this abnegation have you reached? Do not despair of making great progress in it; with grace all is possible.

COLLOQUY. With the holy Precursor of the Messias. — Through his intercession ask for grace to see clearly how subtle, contemptible, criminal and disastrous the passion of envy is in its effects; grace also to fear this passion supremely and to conquer it in such a way that, dead to all self-love, you may seek the greater glory of God alone in all things.

MEDITATION XV.

ON PRIDE

AND ITS EVIL EFFECTS.

I. *Prelude.* Imagine Lucifer falling from heaven down into hell.

II. *Prelude.* Ask for a salutary fear of the spirit of pride.

POINT I. — THE NATURE OF PRIDE.

CONSIDERATIONS. In order to be secure against temptations of envy and other unruly passions which bring unhappiness into our lives, it is necessary to trace them to their source. That source is pride, the consequence and punishment of original sin. The Holy Spirit affirms it in these memorable words : *My son... never*

suffer pride to reign in thy mind, or in thy words : for from it all perdition took its beginning (1). Pride is the beginning of all sin (2).

APPLICATIONS. To be inwardly convinced of this truth we need only know the nature of this deadly sin. What is pride? It is the inordinate love of our own glory. Hence proceed ambition which engenders intrigue, hypocrisy and human respect; lies, interminable excuses, boasting, obstinacy, disputes and divisions. It is also the cause of selfishness and jealousy which produce innumerable sins against charity. For instance, we are annoyed at the success of others, we rejoice over their faults and misfortunes, we depreciate them in our own estimation by suspicious and rash judgments, and often in the estimation of others by detraction and calumny, by malicious insinuations, etc. Have you never noticed any of these effects of pride in yourself?

AFFECTIONS. Humble acknowledgement. — Repentance. — Detestation of pride.

RESOLUTIONS. To resist the first suggestions of pride strongly, by humbling yourself before God.

POINT II. — THE CRIME OF PRIDE.

CONSIDERATIONS. The desire for our own glory is called unruly because it is directly opposed to that supreme rule of all justice. To every one his due. Now God alone is the Author of all that is good and beautiful in His creatures, therefore, to Him alone is due all glory and honour. *Now to... the only God, be honour*

(1) *Tobias*, iv, 13-14. — (2) *Eccle.*, x, 15.

and glory (1). But the proud glory in whatever natural or supernatural gifts they find in themselves. They use them to gain the appreciation and praise of men. In a certain way they put themselves in the place of God, for they steal and appropriate the benefits of God; consequently, is it surprising that God abhors it, as the Holy Spirit says : *Every proud man is an abomination to the Lord* (2), that He resists him, that He withdraws His graces from him and gives them to the humble, according to these words : *God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble* (3).

APPLICATIONS. In order to understand what the crime of pride means in the sight of God, and to conceive a greater horror of it, call to mind the terrible chastisements inflicted on the pride of the angels, on our first parents, on Pharaoh, Nebuchodnezzar, Antiochus and so many others recorded in Holy Scripture. Consider with what tremendous severity God acted also towards the holy kings David and Ezechias who were only guilty of having allowed vanity to enter their hearts, the first by taking a census of his subjects, and the other by displaying the treasures of his palace. Finally, recall the warning given by God, to abandon the proud to their senses, to their evil passions, and to the most shameful excesses (4). Many Catholics, even priests and religious have been led away into heresy, apostasy and eternal ruin through pride, as attested by ecclesiastical history.

AFFECTIONS. Ask for a just appreciation and

(1) I Tim., i, 17. — (2) Prov., xvi, 5. — (3) James, iv, 6. —
(4) Rom., i.

an ever increasing horror of pride, so that you may never be its slave or victim.

RESOLUTIONS. To suppress impulses of pride with the thought of the rebellious angels who were cast from heaven into hell.

POINT III. — THE MISERY OF THE PROUD.

CONSIDERATIONS. How lamentable is the fate of the proud man because his work, his watchings and struggles will have no reward in heaven. This is affirmed by Our Lord when He speaks of the hypocrite Pharisees : *Do not your justice before men, to be seen by them... as the hypocrites do... Amen, I say to you, they have received their reward* (1). He is wretched because instead of gaining appreciation from men, which he has sought so diligently, he gains nothing but their contempt, since flagrant pride is no less hateful to men than to God. *Pride*, says the Holy Spirit, *is hateful before God and men* (2); he is unhappy because he is always tormented with the desire to increase his reputation; is always afraid of suffering some humiliation, and agitated by sinister suspicions or vain fears.

APPLICATIONS. If experience has convinced you of the truth of these considerations, make good use of it; increase your vigilance and energy in the struggle against the greatest and the most perfidious enemy of your salvation, and of all progress in Christian perfection.

COLLOQUY. With your guardian angel. — Beg him ever to assist you in conquering treacherous suggestions of pride.

(1) Matt., vi, 1-2. — (2) Eccle., x, 7.

MEDITATION XVI.

ON HUMILITY.

ITS NATURE AND NECESSITY.

I. *Prelude.* Hear Jesus Christ saying these words : *So shall the last be first, and the first last* (1).

II. *Prelude.* Ask for grace to grow unceasingly in the knowledge, love and practice of humility.

POINT I. — THE NATURE OF HUMILITY.

CONSIDERATIONS. Humility is the root and foundation of all virtues, as pride is the root of all sin. St. Bernard defines it as an acquired virtue or habit by which man despises himself and desires to be despised by others. In other words, it is an habitual disposition of mind and heart by which man, seeing nothing in himself that is his alone, other than sin and the inclination to sin, despises himself that he may see and esteem nothing but God, the source of all good; he is content and even desirous to be forgotten and little appreciated by men, so that God alone may be praised and glorified.

APPLICATIONS. Are you humble? To judge rightly, apply the rule given by Jesus Christ : *By the fruit the tree is known* (2). Examine your thoughts, words and actions. Your thoughts : if you think less about the judgment God has formed of you than of the opinion that men have of you; if you are more anxious to please them than not to displease God; if you aspire to surpass others with the sole idea

(1) Matt., xx, 16. — (2) Id., xii, 33.

of becoming of importance and note, you are not humble. — Your words : If you think you are humble because you sometimes speak badly of yourself, because you allege your incapacity to conduct certain affairs, and at the same time are annoyed and complain when anything is said against you, when you are reproved or when you are humiliated, you may be certain that you have only the appearances of humility, and still less if you give way to recrimination, excuses or lies to extenuate your faults. — Your actions : however good and well performed these may be before men, if you consider your own glory before God's glory you may be sure that you are not humble, and how then can you please God?

AFFECTIONS. Ask God to enlighten you, to help you powerfully by His grace to become humble, and to confirm you in this virtue.

RESOLUTIONS. Instead of being discouraged when I fall into some fault, I shall take the opportunity of humbling myself before God.

POINT II. — THE NECESSITY FOR HUMILITY.

CONSIDERATIONS. It is the same with humility as with faith. Without it we cannot please God because without humility we are worshippers of self, and become repulsive in God's sight. Without humility there is no real virtue since it is the root of all the virtues. Without humility there is no grace : *God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble*, says St. James (1); and without grace no meritorious works are possible. Besides, without virtues

(1) *James*, iv, 6.

and merits the entrance to heaven remains closed against us : consequently, without humility there is no salvation. Our Lord tells us this expressly in these words : *Unless you be converted, and become as little children, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven* (1). Our Divine Saviour spoke these words on the occasion of a dispute among His Apostles as to who amongst them should occupy the chief place ; therefore He referred to the humility and simplicity of children. With far greater reason, neither perfection nor progress in perfection are possible without humility. Moreover without humility we are of little or no use to others in our efforts to assist their spiritual necessities. How can God bless the good works in which we seek our own glory ? Consequently, without humility there is no hope of ever accomplishing the end for which we were created, that of attaining everlasting happiness ; nor even of finding peace and happiness in this world. Is this not all implied in these words of Jesus ? *Learn of me, because I am meek, and humble of heart : and you shall find rest to your souls. For my yoke is sweet and my burden light* (2).

APPLICATIONS. Are you quite convinced of the absolute necessity of humility ? What means do you employ, what efforts do you make to acquire and strengthen it ? With what success have you used them ? To what degree of humility have you attained ? Seek the answer to these questions before God, in all sincerity. You should gain great profit from it.

(1) Matt., xviii, 3. — (2) Id., xi, 29-30.

COLLOQUY. With Jesus Christ Our Saviour, that perfect Master, that admirable Model of humility, and of that part of humility which is most repugnant to nature, namely, the love and practice of humiliations. Earnestly beseech Him to help us to imitate Him, and to make progress in humility. Beg Him for it through the indescribable humiliations He deigned to suffer for us in His Incarnation, in His Birth, His hidden Life, and throughout His public Life and His sorrowful Passion.

MEDITATION XVII.

THE ADVANTAGES AND QUALITIES

OF THE VIRTUE OF HUMILITY.

I. *Prelude.* Hear St. Peter the Apostle saying these words: *God resisteth the proud, but to the humble he giveth grace* (1).

II. *Prelude.* Ask for grace to attain a high degree of humility.

POINT I. — THE ADVANTAGES OF HUMILITY.

CONSIDERATIONS. What is said of wisdom can be applied to humility: *All good things came to me together with her* (2). Happy then is the Christian who possesses it! His progress in every virtue will be rapid and constant; and his happiness will be unalterable. Always convinced of his own unworthiness, and of the infinite majesty of God to Whom he owes all, and Whom he desires to please in everything,

(1) *I Peter*, v, 5. — (2) *Wisdom*, vii, 11.

the humble man has for this very reason, a good intention in all his actions, which makes them meritorious; — a love of God and consequently a love of the cross and of sufferings, since love is proved by things which are hard to nature, says Pope St. Gregory; — zeal for the glory of God which he desires in himself and in others, for he would gladly bring all men to the feet of Jesus Christ; — self-distrust and consequently prudence, modesty and discretion in his words; — obedience, docility and sincerity; — patience and resignation in every trial, for they all appear less than he deserves from God's justice; — promptness in rendering services demanded from his charity or his zeal, even when they appear beyond his strength, because he has put his whole trust in God, and with God's help he feels capable of succeeding in all things; — meekness and gentleness, for he is indulgent towards others, and only hard on himself; — finally, peace of heart for his happiness is unalterable; he finds pleasure in those things which distress the proud : in self-forgetfulness, scorn and insults. *He carries heaven with him everywhere*, says a famous ascetic (1).

APPLICATIONS. Meditate carefully on all these advantages of humility, and you will esteem it as the *pearl of great price* (2), of which Our Lord speaks; and like the merchant in the Gospel, you will feel you can never do too much to acquire it.

AFFECTIONS. With all your heart say with St. Augustine : One favour I ask of Thee, O

(1) BELLARCIUS : *On Solid Virtue*. — (2) Matt., xiii, 46.

my God; make me to know Thee and to know myself, so that this intimate knowledge based on humility, may help me to become more and more humble.

RESOLUTIONS. To acquire the habit of saying that beautiful aspiration which seems to have been a particular favourite with the saintly Doctor.

POINT II. — THE QUALITIES OF HUMILITY.

CONSIDERATIONS. Let us carefully consider the inward nature and qualities of humility in order to avoid certain errors and illusions which are not unusual. Many people imagine that humility is something unnatural which is not in the least founded on reason, although in reality it proceeds from the purest conceptions of truth and justice. Had disorder not been introduced into our understanding by original sin, we should all be naturally humble. Others think that humility forbids us to conceal our faults, to seek and maintain our honour and our rights, to display our talents or to acknowledge them even to ourselves, to aspire to the esteem and respect of our subordinates for our knowledge and ability in the management of affairs. It is a mistake. For these things are not contrary to humility when they are demanded in the interests of God's glory, and the good of souls, and when we have no other end in view, no desire for our own interests or aggrandisement. Others finally persuade themselves that humility is synonymous with pusillanimity; that a humble man is not likely to conceive and undertake great things nor heroic actions; yet the contrary is the truth. When

pride recoils before difficulties, or before fear of failure and criticism, the humble man undeterred by calculations and apprehensions, goes resolutely forward as soon as he knows the will of God ; nothing appears difficult to him ; he believes he can say, like the Apostle : *I can do all things in him who strengtheneth me* (1).

APPLICATIONS. To form a true idea on the virtue of humility, consider the most humble of virgins, Mary. She acknowledges and makes known to the whole world, the exceptional gifts and privilèges she has received : *He that is mighty hath done great things to me* (2) : but she ascribes all the glory to God, saying : *My soul doth magnify the Lord* (3). Consider St. Paul. Before the pagans he vigorously defended his rights as a Roman citizen, and before the Christians of Asia the right which by his vast labours and by his revelations, he had acquired to their respect, their love and their deference ; but he did it solely in the interests of the preaching of the Gospel. When it only concerned himself personally, he suffered persecutions and insults without uttering a word of complaint, and regarded himself as the least of the Apostles. Put away the erroneous ideas you may have had on humility, and increase your efforts to excel in this virtue.

COLLOQUY. With Our Lady. — Thank her for having obtained for you the knowledge and love of humility. — Ask her to obtain for you the grace to make progress in the practice of humility of mind and heart.

(1) *Philipp.*, iv, 13. — (2) *Luke*, i, 49. — (3) *Id.*, 45.

MEDITATION XVIII.

ON THE CHIEF MEANS

OF ACQUIRING AND STRENGTHENING HUMILITY
WITHIN US.

I. *Prelude.* Hear the Apostle saying of Our Divine Lord *He humbled himself... For which cause God also hath exalted him* (1).

II. *Prelude.* Ask for strength to employ with constancy all means of acquiring and increasing humility.

POINT I. — TO AVOID WHATEVER IS HARMFUL TO HUMILITY.
— THE FIRST MEANS OF ACQUIRING AND STRENGTHENING HUMILITY.

CONSIDERATIONS. If you fervently desire to obtain humility so that it may be the companion of your life, watch above all, that there may be nothing detrimental to it in your thoughts, words and actions; nothing that flatters pride, and nourishes vanity. — Do not dwell on the memory of the good actions of your past life, nor on the thoughts of vain complacency which recur to your mind; oppose them with the remembrance of your sins. Repel temptations of pride by interior acts of humility. Do not speak of yourself either well or badly without serious reason. Do not make excuses when you are reprov'd. Do not seek to dominate in conversation, nor to impose your opinion. Avoid anything in your behaviour and your manner like affectation, boasting, singularity or pretension, in a word anything that is harmful to humility.

APPLICATIONS. Have you been faithful to

(1) *Phillip.*, ii, 8-9

these rules which ordinary good sense recommends to you as the chief means of acquiring humility? These are only negative means, it is true, but if we neglect them, all others will be of little use

AFFECTIONS. Ask for grace to have ever in mind the thought of your nothingness and your unworthiness, so that you may retain a profound humility.

RESOLUTIONS. To repeat frequently with this intention, the humble prayer of the penitent King : *Have mercy on me, O Lord, according to Thy great mercy* (1), or this one of the publican praised by Our Lord : *O God, be merciful to me a sinner* (2).

POINT II. — TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF OPPORTUNITIES
FOR PRACTISING HUMILITY. — THE SECOND MEANS.

CONSIDERATIONS. The moral virtues are not infused as are the theological virtues. Therefore we should acquire them by assiduously practising virtuous deeds. From this arises the axiom : « There is no humility without humiliations ». But what hinders us is that we cannot find the strength in ourselves to oppose our self-love seriously, and that often those who direct us do not dare to humiliate us for fear of exasperating us. God however has pity on us, for He sends us humiliations which are far more efficacious and all the harder to bear since they are not our own choice. Sometimes these will be mental sufferings, doubts, scruples, painful and humiliating temptations, which force us to ask for advice or comfort in

(1) Ps. L, 1. — (2) Luke, XVIII, 13.

all humility. Again, they will be indisposition, weakness and illness which makes us dependent instead of useful to others. Sometimes they may be misunderstandings, a conjunction of circumstances which are truly unbearable to our self-love; God allows our efforts to be constantly denied success, we misunderstand the intentions of those who are in authority over us, and when we think we have done well, we are reproofed; or He allows those with whom we live to be deceived by false impressions, and to minister unmerited reproof; or yet again allows us to be for a certain time under a cloud as victims of calumny.

APPLICATIONS. When God permits this, He acts for our good. He provides us with precious opportunities for rising to a high degree of humility; let us learn how to profit by them, and instead of complaining and becoming discouraged, let us say with King David, when he was pursued by the clamour of the rebels : *It is good for me that thou hast humbled me* (1).

AFFECTIONS. Earnestly ask for grace and courage to make good use of humiliations, like David and so many others.

RESOLUTIONS. When I am in serious difficulties I will think of Jesus with His reputation lost, dying between two notorious criminals.

POINT III. — TO MAKE FREQUENT ACTS OF HUMILITY.
THE THIRD MEANS.

CONSIDERATIONS. The Christian who ardently desires to be strengthened and to make progress in humility, is not content with accepting

(1) Ps. CXVIII, 71.

the humiliations which God sends him, but also voluntarily makes interior and exterior acts of humility several times a day.

APPLICATIONS. Do the same. First be conscientious in the practices of humility you have undertaken, and take advantage of opportunities which occur to make still more, but make them all in a spirit of humility.

COLLOQUY. With Our Lord, Who encourages us by His example to practise humility.

MEDITATION XIX.

THE CONVERSATION OF JESUS

WITH THE SAMARITAN WOMAN.

I. *Prelude.* See Jesus weary, and seated near Jacob's well.

II. *Prelude.* Ask for grace to sanctify both your weariness and your relaxation.

POINT I. — THE WEARINESS OF JESUS.

CONSIDERATIONS. The Gospel informs us that, at the commencement of the first year of Our Lord's ministry, His holy Precursor was cast into prison. There he had to end his holy mission by martyrdom. The mission of Jesus consequently was to be more openly manifested. But as He was persecuted in Judea, He again went to Galilee by traversing Samaria. The journey was long and difficult. *He cometh therefore, says St. John, to a city of Samaria which is called Sichar; near the land which Jacob gave to his son Joseph. Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied with*

his journey, sat thus on the well. It was about the sixth hour (1).

APPLICATIONS. You also have felt, and will often feel fatigued, exhausted, overcome and you will long for a moment's rest. Yet what a consolation it is to be able to say : my weariness resembles that of my Lord since it is also the result of fulfilling my duties and the good works to which I give my spare time. Happy weariness ! It will bring me an immense increase of happiness in heaven, for God is liberal and magnificent in His rewards. Help and encourage yourself if necessary, by saying to yourself like St. Augustine : Labour has an end ; reward will be eternal.

AFFECTIONS. Offer your loving Saviour all the strength that is in you so that He may dispose of it freely. Ask Him for a great and generous heart in return.

RESOLUTIONS. To purify your intention from all mingling of self-love, so that you may not lose the merit of your weariness.

POINT II. — THE REPOSE OF JESUS.

CONSIDERATIONS. Jesus Christ being in all things like to us, was really fatigued, and when He sat down at Jacob's well, He really desired to recover from His weariness. But He knew how to make good use of His rest by entering into conversation with a poor sinful woman of Sichar who had gone there to draw water ; this conversation effected her conversion, and that of a great number of her fellow-citizens.

(1) John, iv, 5-6.

APPLICATIONS. Here we have before our eyes in the Person of our loving Saviour, the model of Christian zeal which should aim everywhere and always, even in hours of repose and relaxation, at utilising the time for furthering the glory of God and the salvation of souls. Do you not find this model in some of your friends who have always in reserve some historical deed, some anecdote or comparison which both charms and edifies, and encourages virtue without our suspecting it? Try to imitate them.

AFFECTIONS. Ask for grace to sanctify your relaxations not only by good intentions, but as much as possible besides by zeal and works of charity.

RESOLUTIONS. To examine in detail where, when and how we can do it.

POINT III. — THE ZEAL OF JESUS.

CONSIDERATIONS. While Jesus was sitting near Jacob's well *there cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water. Jesus saith to her : Give me to drink... Then that Samaritan woman saith to him : How dost thou, being a Jew, ask of me to drink, who am a Samaritan woman?... Jesus answered and said to her : If thou didst know the gift of God, and who he is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou perhaps wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water... springing up into life everlasting... Jesus saith to her : Go call thy husband, and come hither (1).* Observe

(1) John, iv, 7-16.

with what dexterity, and patience Our Lord leads the Samaritan woman to self-knowledge and conversion. In the first place He takes the circumstance of the water she comes to draw, to enable her to know and desire the salutary waters of grace; then He commands her to bring her husband, to draw from her the avoyal of the licentious life she is leading; after that, by reminding her of all the evil she has done in her life. He opens her eyes so that she exclaims : *Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet* (1). Finally in answering her questions concerning the promised Messias, He reveals Himself wholly to her. — The Samaritan recognises her Saviour — from a sinner she becomes an apostle, and she runs to the city, to bring the inhabitants to the feet of Jesus.

APPLICATIONS. Is not this the way in which God has deigned to act in regard to you? — the way He has led you by degrees to know your self, and the vanities and dangers of the world, and from that to the appreciation, love and practice of piety and virtue? Thank Him with all your heart, and act in the same way towards those whom you desire to bring back to a holy life. Too often we spoil the effects of an otherwise praiseworthy zeal, because we do not know how to wait for a favourable moment, nor how sufficiently to consider the susceptibilities of others.

COLLOQUY. With the holy Patron of our baptism.

(1) John, iv, 19.

MEDITATION XX.

THE FAITH OF THE INHABITANTS
OF SICHAR.

THE MISSION IN GALILEE (1).

I. *Prelude.* Hear Jesus saying : *My meat is to do the will of him that sent me* (2).

II. *Prelude.* Ask for grace to know and fulfil in all things the will of God.

POINT I. — THE MYSTERIOUS FOOD OF JESUS.

CONSIDERATIONS. When the Samaritan woman arrived at Sichar, she *saith to the men there : Come, and see a man who has told me all things whatsoever I have done... In the meantime the disciples, having returned from their expedition to buy food, prayed him saying : Rabbi, eat. But he said to them : I have meat to eat which you know not... My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, that I may perfect his work* (3), the work of creation by the redemption and sanctification of men.

APPLICATIONS. Meditate carefully on these

(1) Galilee, which will often be mentioned, comprised the tribes of Nephthalim, Dan and Zabulon. Favourably situated between Jordan, Phœnicia, the Lake of Tiberias and the Mediterranean, it had grown rich through commerce, and had a large population. It was divided into Lower and Upper Galilee; the former near the Lake of Tiberias, or the Sea of Galilee; Upper Galilee was also called Galilee of the Gentiles, because a great many idolaters or Gentiles had settled there. Jesus Christ was called the Galilean because He was brought up in Nazareth and performed His first miracles there.

(2) John, iv, 34. — (3) Id., 28-34.

wonderful words for they will enable you to understand how eagerly Jesus desires your sanctification, more eagerly than a starving man desires food. That you may have some idea of the fervour and efficacy of that desire, go over in your mind all that Our Saviour has done for the redemption of the world, and particularly for your own sanctification. How great has your co operation and gratitude been? These words will also teach you that in order to conform to the desires of Jesus Christ, you should endeavour to learn the designs of God concerning you, and to fulfil them faithfully. How have you done this till now? Finally they will tell you that it is impossible for you to show too much zeal for the glory of God and the salvation of souls; counting as nothing, if necessary, hunger, thirst, watchings, and opposition of all kinds. Do you possess this zeal?

AFFECTIONS. Ask, with fervent aspirations, to be numbered amongst those of whom Jesus said : *Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after justice : for they shall have their fill* (1).

RESOLUTIONS. To see in what way we have been lacking in zeal, and amend it at once.

POINT II. — THE SOJOURN OF JESUS IN SICHAR.

CONSIDERATIONS. AS soon as the inhabitants of Sichar or Sicham, who came hurriedly at the woman's request, had seen and heard Jesus, they were so attracted by Him that *they desired him that he would tarry there*. Jesus granted their request; *and he abode there two days. And many more believed in him... And*

(1) Matt., v, 6.

they said to the woman : We now believe, not for thy saying : for we ourselves have heard him, and know that this is indeed the Saviour of the world (1).

APPLICATIONS. What a glory for these Samaritans to be the first of the nations to recognise in Jesus Christ that beautiful characteristic ; Saviour of the world ? What a privilege for them to have believed in Him, to have found in Him the treasures of faith, of sanctifying grace, and the pledge of eternal happiness. And all this was the fruit of the momentary Presence of Jesus, and of a few instructions from Him. To know Jesus is to appreciate and love Him ; if we had always known Him well we would never have offended Him.

AFFECTIONS. O Jesus, teach me to know Thee ; speak to my heart ; inflame me with Thy love.

RESOLUTIONS. To choose spiritual books to read which deal with the knowledge and love of Jesus Christ.

POINT III. — THE MISSION OF JESUS IN GALILEE.

CONSIDERATIONS. Jesus passed on immediately from Sichar into Galilee there to enter upon that great mission which, by the fame of His miracles, would arouse mens' attention, would give Him great influence over the people, and would make His doctrine known, spreading His reputation afar, and would serve as a model for all His future missions. *He departed thence, says St. John, and went into Galilee (2). From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say :*

(1) John, iv, 40-42. — (2) Id., 43.

Do penance, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand (1). Repent, and believe the gospel (2). And the fame of him was spread forthwith into all the country of Galilee (3).

APPLICATIONS. If your position in life gives you authority over others, seek to create the influence which is so necessary in order that you may be listened to and obeyed, not by attractive force of miraculous deeds which are not in your power, but by the authority given by virtue and a blameless life. Fear above all that there may be applied to you the censure which Jesus passed on the Pharisees : *They say, and do not (4)*. Strive on the contrary to be able like Him, to say to your subordinates : *I have given you an example (5)*.

COLLOQUY. With your Divine Model and Saviour.

MEDITATION XXI.

THE MIRACULOUS CURE

OF THE SON OF A MAN OF CAPHARNAUM.

I. *Prelude*. See at the feet of Jesus an afflicted and suppliant father.

II. *Prelude*. Ask for an unbounded trust in the providence and goodness of God.

POINT I. — AN AFFLICTED FATHER HAVING RECOURSE
TO JESUS.

CONSIDERATIONS. The first miracle by which Our Lord desired to prove His Divine mission before all the people, and to awaken faith in

(1) Matt., iv, 17. — (2) Mark, i, 15. — (3) Id., 28. —
(4) Matt., xxiii, 3. — (5) John., xiii, 15.

the hearts of men, was performed for the consolation of an afflicted father, a man of importance amongst his people, and known throughout all Galilee. The deed is related by St. John in these words : *He having heard that Jesus was come from Judea into Galilee, went to him, and prayed him to come down and heal his son, for he was at the point of death* (1).

APPLICATIONS. Let us reflect here on something which should be of use to us. To what did this man owe the happiness of knowing the Messiah! To affliction; it was that which brought him to the feet of Jesus, and which effected his salvation. Therefore we are wrong in regarding afflictions sent us by God as evils or to complain of them. Have you perhaps made this mistake? Then notice that this man delayed having recourse to Jesus until his son was reduced to the last extremity. That was wrong and we blame him, but do we not imitate him when, in our necessities of soul and body we do not go to God until we have exhausted all human means, and frequently like men with no faith, after having sought vain consolations from creatures? Is it surprising that God on His part should delay to come to our assistance?

AFFECTIONS. Admire and bless the wisdom of God that wounds in order to heal. — Place yourself entirely in His hands. — Abandon yourself to His Fatherly Providence.

RESOLUTIONS. I will always in future seek my consolation in God above all, and wait for His assistance with filial confidence.

(1) John., iv, 47.

POINT II. — THE REPROOF ADDRESSED TO THE FATHER
BY JESUS.

CONSIDERATIONS. The man of Capharnaum's hope of obtaining from Jesus the cure of his child, came from a faith which was as yet imperfect. He did not think that Jesus, being some distance from the patient, could restore him to health. For this reason Our Lord said to him : *Unless you see signs and wonders you believe not* (1). The father received this reproof with humility, and continued to reiterate his petition with respectful confidence : *Lord, he said, come down before that my son die* (2). These holy dispositions won for him the favour he solicited, with the gift of more perfect faith. *Jesus saith to him : Go thy way, thy son liveth. The man believed the word which Jesus said to him, and went his way* (3).

APPLICATIONS. Our Lord acts in the same way with us as He acted with this suppliant father. If He appears to refuse to heed us, if He delays before granting the favour we ask, it is either to enable us to realise its value more, or to give us an opportunity of practising patience, resignation, faith and confidence. Therefore never cease to ask for His blessings. He will end by granting them, if they are for our good.

AFFECTIONS. With all your heart say with the Apostles : *Lord, increase our faith* (4). *Lord, teach us to pray* (5).

RESOLUTIONS. Before praying, and often during prayer, I will try to arouse my faith and confidence.

(1) John, iv, 4. — (2) Id., 49. — (3) Id., 50. — (4) Luke, xvii, 5. — (5) Id., xi, 1.

POINT III. — THE FAVOURS CONCEDED TO THE FATHER
BY JESUS.

CONSIDERATIONS. Although the father firmly believed that his son had been miraculously cured, he was eager to leave Cana and go in haste to Capharnaum, in order to see with his own eyes the fulfilment of the Divine promises. The night he had to spend on the journey must have appeared very long to him. But what must his joy have been when *his servants met him; and they brought word; saying, that his son lived. He asked therefore of them the hour wherein he grew better. And they said to him : Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him. The father therefore knew that it was at the same hour that Jesus said to him, Thy son liveth; and himself believed and his whole house* (1), that Jesus was the Son of God and the Messiah.

APPLICATIONS. Admire the loving-kindness and the liberality of your Divine Saviour. An afflicted father comes to ask Him to heal his son, and Jesus immediately restores him to perfect health. But not content with that, He bestows on the father himself, as well as on his son and all the members of the family, the gift of faith, and as we may presume, final perseverance, and everlasting life and happiness. May the thought of so much goodness and generosity enable you to grow daily in a practical love of Jesus Christ.

COLLOQUY. Ask Him for that grace.

(1) John, iv, 51-53.

MEDITATION XXII.

THE SOJOURN OF JESUS
IN CAPHARNAUM.

I. *Prelude.* Imagine Jesus preaching in the Synagogue at Capharnaum.

II. *Prelude.* Ask for docility to grace.

POINT I. — JESUS MAKES HIS HOME IN CAPHARNAUM.

CONSIDERATIONS. After preaching for some days in Cana, Jesus went to Capharnaum where He made His home (1), in preference to Nazareth or any of the other cities of Galilee. *And leaving the city Nazareth he came and dwelt in Capharnaum*, are the words of St. Matthew (2). What is the reason for this choice? Interpreters answer that it was because Capharnaum was the most populated town in Galilee, favourably situated near the mouth of the Jordan on the Sea of Galilee or Tiberias for communication with the surrounding towns, and several of the neighbouring provinces. Consequently it was very well adapted for the preaching of the Gospel, and offered a vast field for the zeal of Jesus, as well as for the manifestation of His Infinite mercies. The people of Capharnaum greatly needed them, for commerce, wealth and luxury had introduced great corruption amongst them.

(1) It is of this home that the Evangelists are understood to speak when they say . *He entered the city, — And when he was come into the house* (Matt., xvii, 24).

(2) Matt., iv, 13.

APPLICATIONS. You are attracted by good works, and perhaps you wish to take an active part in them, but you wonder which of these good works is the most suitable for you? The choice perplexes you. In this case follow the example of your Divine Master, and choose the work which you think will be productive of most good. Besides, in this matter you are allowed to follow your inclinations and tastes, for good works have multiplied so greatly in our day, which is providential, for otherwise many would be neglected.

AFFECTIONS. Ask God to inspire you in your choice of good works, and to guide you by grace in carrying them out.

RESOLUTIONS. To be on your guard against the temptations of selflove, and against the perverse inclinations of nature.

POINT II. — JESUS PREACHES IN THE SYNAGOGUE
AT CAPHARNAUM

CONSIDERATIONS. *And they enter into Capharnaum, says the Evangelist and forthwith on the Sabbath day going into the synagogue, he taught them. And they were astonished at his doctrine. For he was teaching them as one having power, and not as the scribes (1).*

APPLICATIONS. Observe that the words of Jesus made quite a different impression on the minds of the people from the words of the Scribes, not only because He spoke as a Master and Lawgiver, but because He practised what He taught, and because everything in His actions and words showed that He forgot Him-

(1) Mark, i, 21-22.

self, that He only sought the glory of His heavenly Father and the salvation of men. The Scribes, on the contrary, openly contradicted their doctrine by their deeds, and their conduct betrayed that they sought their own glory and interest. Is there no sign of vanity and self-seeking in what you do for others?

AFFECTIONS. Ask for self-forgetfulness, especially in your good works, so that the less you seek self in them, the more God may deign to take an interest in them.

RESOLUTIONS. Often to renew a right intention by some ejaculatory prayer.

POINT III. — JESUS DELIVERS A MAN POSSESSED
OF AN UNCLEAN SPIRIT.

CONSIDERATIONS. *And there was in their synagogue, a man with an unclean spirit, and he cried out saying : What have we to do with thee, Jesus of Nazareth? art thou come to destroy us? I know who thou art, the Holy one of God. And Jesus threatened him saying : Speak no more and go out of the man. And the unclean spirit tearing him, and crying out with a loud voice, went out of him (1).*

APPLICATIONS. Here we see how unhappy is the man who by sin, above all by that of impurity, allows the devil to enter his heart. Let us fear, and be vigilant. We see too how impotent the fury of devils is against those who have recourse to Jesus. Let us invoke Him in our temptations. — Again, how Jesus knows how to draw good from evil, for all that the devil had done to ruin this unhappy man, turned to

(1) Mark, i, 23-26.

the advantage of the Gospel by helping to spread afar the reputation of Jesus, and by preparing the people to accept His teaching. Let us not be scandalised then at the evil that God permits the devil to do. He will know how to turn it to our advantage, and to the general good of the Church. Let us hasten these joyful results by our prayers accompanied by unbounded confidence.

COLLOQUY. With Jesus, in accordance with the Affections of the first two points.

MEDITATION XXIII.

JESUS

IN THE HOUSE OF ST. PETER.

HE CURES THE APOSTLE'S WIFE'S MOTHER.

I. *Prelude.* See Jesus raising Simon Peter's wife's mother from her bed of sickness.

II. *Prelude.* Ask for love of Jesus, and that you may be healed of all your spiritual infirmities.

POINT I. — JESUS STAYS IN SIMON PETER'S HOUSE.

CONSIDERATIONS. After the remarkable miracle performed by Jesus in the synagogue at Capharnaum, which had won Him universal admiration He could have stayed at any of the most luxurious houses of the city, where it would have been counted an honour to receive Him and to entertain Him magnificently. But He did not desire it. *And immediately going out of the synagogue, says the Evangelist, they came into the house of Simon and Andrew,*

with James and John (1), there to take refreshment and rest, showing in this way a marked preference for poor and humble people. Besides, another motive attracted Him, charity for a neighbour : *Simon's wife's mother lay in a fit of fever* (2), says St. Mark.

APPLICATIONS. Do you show the same preference as your Divine Master and Model? For instance : to whom do you give the preference in the visits you pay? From what principles do you act? Is it well organised charity and the fulfilment of a duty of Christian courtesy which determines your choice? — or is it not rather vanity and the love of praise, especially when you think you deserve gratitude for some good action? — Is it not perhaps also self-indulgence, or some other motive yet more unworthy? Have you courage to question yourself and to demand an answer in all sincerity? Perhaps you will find cause in this examination for very just shame, and salutary fear?

AFFECTIONS. Teach me, Lord, to despise what is esteemed by men who have but earthly thoughts, and to seek only Thee and my salvation in all things.

RESOLUTIONS. I will often question myself on the motives which make me act.

POINT II. — JESUS HEALS SIMON'S WIFE'S MOTHER.

CONSIDERATIONS. *And Simon's wife's mother lay in a fit of a fever : and forthwith they tell him of her* (3)... *and they besought him for her* (4). *And coming to her, he lifted her up,*

(1) Mark, i, 29. — (2) Id., 30. — (3) Id. — (4) Luke, iv, 38.

taking her by the hand (1) he commanded the fever (2) and immediately the fever left her (3).

APPLICATIONS. These words of the Gospel remind us of two practical and consoling truths. In the first place, one of the qualities necessary for charity, is readiness. The disciples did not wait for Simon's wife's mother to request their services. As soon as Jesus crossed the threshold of the door, they all immediately asked for a miracle in favour of the sick woman. — Therefore, this text reminds us that intercession made in favour of the needy and suffering of Every kind is pleasing to God, and that it has great power over His Heart, for the prayer was granted as soon as it was said. The sick woman was instantly healed. Imitate the charity of the disciples. Anticipate by your services the desires and necessities of those who suffer around you, and when you implore the intercession of the Saints for yourself, they will obtain for you graces proportionate and beyond what you have done for others.

AFFECTIONS. Throw yourself at the Feet of Jesus; recommend to Him all sufferers, and in particular, the suffering members of your family, and your relations.

RESOLUTIONS. To revive in yourself the spirit of charity, that tender, expansive, ready and generous charity which St. Peter recommended so much to the early Christians : *Before all things have a constant, mutual charity among yourselves : for charity covereth a multitude of sins (4).*

(1) Mark, i, 31. — (2) Luke, iv, 39. — (3) Mark, i, 31. — (4) I Peter, iv, 8.

POINT III. - JESUS IS REPAID WITH GRATITUDE.

CONSIDERATIONS. *And immediately rising,* says St. Luke, *she ministered to them* (1). Think with what joy, love and gratitude she performed it; with what solicitude and attention.

APPLICATIONS. The eagerness with which this woman testified her gratitude to Jesus was only natural for she owed her life, her health and the use of her limbs to Him; what was more natural, we say, than that she should do homage for it to her Benefactor? The reflection is correct, but let us apply it to ourselves. Are not we indebted also to God for health, life, the use of our limbs, and the faculties of our souls? Do not gratitude and justice demand that we should use them for His greater glory with all the fervour and diligence of which we are capable? There is no doubt about it. But have we done it? Do we generally do it?

COLLOQUY. With Jesus our Divine Model and supreme Benefactor.

MEDITATION XXIV.

JESUS INTERRUPTS HIS WORKS OF CHARITY AND ZEAL
BY PRAYER.

I. *Prelude.* Imagine Jesus going from Capharnaum into solitude to give Himself up to prayer.

II. *Prelude.* Ask for a spirit of charity and zeal added to a spirit of prayer, as fruit of this meditation.

POINT I. — JESUS TAKES COMPASSION ON ALL INFIRMITIES.

CONSIDERATIONS. And when the sun was down,

(1) Luke, iv, 39.

says St. Luke (1), *all they that had any sick with divers diseases, brought them to him. But he laying his hands on every one of them, healed them* (2). Observe the excessive goodness of Jesus, and how easy it was to approach Him. These attractive qualities never diminished throughout the course of His Divine mission; neither an inconvenient time, nor weariness, nor the hindrance of the many sufferers crowding round Him, were able to draw from Him the least sign of anger, impatience or haste. He could have got rid of this crowd of petitioners by healing them all at one time, but He did not do it; He laid His hands on each one of them, and addressed words of comfort to them : *He laying his hands on every one of them* (3).

APPLICATIONS. Strive to copy this Divine Model : try always to be gracious, calm and self-restrained, always accessible to all, forgetting your own sufferings in order to relieve those of others. This implies great perfection, which is not natural to man. What efforts have you made to attain it? And with what success?

AFFECTIONS. Express the desire, and ask for grace to reproduce and bear the image of Jesus Christ in yourself, according to these words of the Apostle : *Whom he foreknew, he also*

(1) *When the sun was down, they... brought to him, etc.* In order to understand this passage, note that the prescribed rest of the Sabbath, (Saturday) was obligatory from the evening before until sunset of the following evening. But the Jews, led into error by the Pharisees, interpreted it far too literally. From this arose their scruple to carry the sick before sunset on the Sabbath day and, as we shall often see further on, the charges made against Jesus Christ, of healing the sick on the Sabbath.

(2) Luke, iv, 40. — (3) Id.

predestinated to be made conformable to the image of his Son (1).

RESOLUTIONS. I will contrive to be always easily accessible to all so that no one need seek favourable moments.

POINT II. — JESUS RETIRES TO PRAY.

CONSIDERATIONS. *And rising very early, says St. Mark, going out he went into a desert place : and there he prayed* (2). What lesson does our Divine Saviour give us here? By His example He teaches us first, to avoid the presence of men when we have performed a good action, for fear of allowing vain-glory to enter our hearts : secondly, to be recollected, and to enter into ourselves after having been for a considerable time with distracting occupations, even if their object has been that of zeal or charity, for fear of giving way to dissipation, and all the evils it engenders. — Again, to sustain action by prayer, in order to find in union with God fresh strength and blessings for subsequent work.

APPLICATIONS. Ask yourself with the utmost sincerity to what extent your conduct is conformable to the lessons and examples given you by your Divine Master.

AFFECTIONS. « Multiply upon us thy mercy, that thou being our ruler and guide, we may so pass through temporal blessings that we lose not those that are eternal (3) ».

RESOLUTIONS. In all my occupations, I will try to be interiorly united to God.

(1) *Rom.*, viii, 29. — (2) *Mark*, i, 35. — (3) *Roman Missal*. Collect 3rd Sunday after Pentecost.

POINT III. — JESUS TRAVELS OVER ALL GALILEE.

CONSIDERATIONS. AS soon as the inhabitants of Capharnaum discovered the place to which Jesus had retired, *the multitudes sought him, and came unto him : and they stayed him that he should not depart from them. To whom he said : To other cities also I must preach the kingdom of God : for therefore am I sent (1). And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the Gospel of the kingdom ; and healing all manner of sickness, and every infirmity among the people. And his fame went throughout all Syria... And much people followed him (2).*

APPLICATIONS. Observe that it is after having spent a considerable time in prayer that Jesus reveals this ardent and indefatigable zeal which you admire. Do not be content with admiring, but imitate your Divine Model. Like Him, seek in prayer for the strength you require to fulfil your duties faithfully as an apostle, and to encourage those around you to do good, those over whom you have authority or influence. Prayer will give you power over all hearts.

MEDITATION XXV.

THE DETACHMENT

DEMANDED FROM US BY JESUS CHRIST.

I. *Prelude.* Hear Jesus saying : *Every one of you that doth not renounce all that he possesseth, cannot be my disciple (3).*

II. *Prelude.* Ask for complete and perfect detachment from all that can prevent you from devoting yourself wholly to God and to your sanctification.

(1) Luke, iv, 42-43. — (2) Matt., iv, 23-25. — (3) Luke, xiv, 33.

POINT I. — DETACHMENT FROM THE RICHES AND HONOURS OF THE WORLD.

CONSIDERATIONS. *And a certain scribe came and said to him : Master, I will follow thee whithersoever thou shalt go. And Jesus said to him : The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air nests : but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head* (1). Most interpreters conclude from this answer that Jesus who sees the innermost heart, knew that the Scribe, though desirous to follow Him, yet above all expected to obtain worldly honours by following a man who was already so famous, and imagined he would eventually attain great importance and wealth. Undeceived by the profession of strict poverty made by Jesus, he drew back and ceased to form part of Our Lord's disciples. — What became of him? — Was he saved?

APPLICATIONS. You must not conclude from this consideration that Our Lord makes evangelical poverty or the absolute renunciation of the benefits and honours of the world a condition of salvation, for He only counsels it. What He asks is that you should detach your heart from these perishable benefits; that you should be ready to lose them rather than lose God and your soul; that you should use them as means of salvation and sanctification, redeeming your sins by alms, and using the influence given by fortune and honours for the good of religion, and for supporting good works. What importance have you attached to this teaching and how have you acted in regard to it?

(1) Matt., viii, 19-20.

AFFECTIONS. They will consist of making acts of faith on the truths you have been considering, and in asking for grace to make your conduct conformable with them.

RESOLUTIONS. To oppose the allurements of the world with the memory of these words of Jesus : *What doth it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, and suffer the loss of his own soul* (1)?

POINT II. — HIS DETACHMENT FROM HIS PARENTS.

CONSIDERATIONS. After the Scribe had retired, Jesus with a look of predilection at another of His hearers, deigned to call him to the grace of apostleship : *He said to another : Follow me* (2). This one, though disposed in every way to follow his vocation, only asked permission to postpone its fulfilment for some time ; *He said : Lord, suffer me first to go, and to bury my father* (3). By that he meant that he wanted to attend to his father in his old age, and not to leave him until after his death. Our Lord did not accede to his request : *Jesus said to him : Let the dead bury their dead : but go thou, and preach the kingdom of God* (4).

APPLICATIONS. We must conclude from this answer of Jesus that he whom He called to the apostolate was not indispensable to the support of his aged father, and that other members of the family could well look after him ; that the delay asked for arose from misplaced affection and exposed him to the loss of his sublime vocation, and of the magnificent rewards to be gained through it, and perhaps even of the

(1) Matt., xvi, 26. — (2) Luke, ix, 59 — (3) Id. — (4) Id., 60.

eternal salvation of his soul. This is a great lesson for children who are invited by God to leave their father or mother to walk in the footsteps of His Divine Son in the path of evangelical counsels or the apostolate. A great lesson too for parents from whom the Lord asks the sacrifice of a child for such a sublime cause.

AFFECTIONS. An offering of your entire self to the most holy Will of God.

RESOLUTIONS. To renew this offering gladly in temptations of pusillanimity or discouragement.

POINT III. — HIS DETACHMENT FROM HIS RELATIONS
AND FRIENDS.

CONSIDERATIONS. St. Luke here mentions the vocation of a third disciple who likewise asks for delay : *Another said : I will follow thee, Lord, but let me first take my leave of them that are of my house. Jesus said to him : No man putting his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God (1).*

APPLICATIONS. By these words, so often cited in spiritual treatises, Jesus teaches us that those who have determined to follow Him in the sublime paths of perfection and zeal, should not allow themselves to be turned aside to serve the temporal interests of their relatives, nor should make use of religion for their ambitious intentions, but should think solely of pressing ever forward to the goal of the holy vocation to which they have dedicated themselves. If, sustained by grace, you have persevered in this manner, rejoice; give thanks to

(1) Luke, ix, 61-62.

God. But be not without distrust of men and yourself.

COLLOQUY. With your Guardian Angel, who is your companion in this world, without being in the least attached to the world, or to any of the attractions and alluring delights that the world can offer.

MEDITATION XXVI.

JESUS AND HIS DISCIPLES

ASSAILED BY THE TEMPEST.

I. *Prelude.* See Peter's ship battered by the waves, almost sinking, whilst Jesus is asleep in it.

II. *Prelude.* Ask for an absolute trust in Divine Providence.

POINT I. — PETER'S SHIP IS VIOLENTLY BATTERED BY THE TEMPEST NOTWITHSTANDING THE PRESENCE OF JESUS.

CONSIDERATIONS. *And he saith to them that day, when evening was come : Let us pass over to the other side. And sending away the multitude (1)... he went into a little ship with his disciples... And when they were sailing, he slept (2)... And behold a great tempest arose in the sea (3)... and they were filled, and were in danger (4)... And he was in the hinder part of the ship sleeping (5) upon a pillow (6).*

(1) Mark, iv, 35-36. — (2) Luke, viii, 22-23. — (3) Matt., viii, 24. — (4) Luke, viii, 23.

(5) Jesus Christ's sleep was real : but this sleep, though it suspended the use of His senses as is usual with all men, did not deprive Him of the liberty of His soul, nor of the knowledge of what was taking place. Jesus Christ could say expressly of Himself : *I sleep, and my heart... and my mind... watch.* (*Canticles*, v, 2.)

(6) Mark, iv, 38.

• APPLICATIONS. Two things strike us especially in this event, recorded by the three Evangelists even to the smallest details, and both contain useful lessons. In the first place, there is the tempest, threatening to engulf the disciples notwithstanding Our Lord's Presence; then the deep sleep of Jesus during the violent tempest. What practical conclusions can we gather from them? That we are wrong in thinking that we are forsaken or rejected by God when calmness leaves our soul and we are left the prey to violent temptations or even to terrible persecutions. That we are wrong also, under these circumstances, in giving way so easily to anxiety and fear as if Our Divine Master were not with us, watching over our salvation.

AFFECTIONS. Ask pardon for our cowardice and our vain fears.

RESOLUTIONS. When we feel the waves of unruly passions rising up against us, or when we are faced with great difficulties, let us throw our selves on the breast of Divine Providence. There we shall find rest, represented by the pillow on which Jesus slept. *He was in the hinder part of the ship, says St. Mark, sleeping upon a pillow* (1).

POINT II. — THE DISTRUSTFUL DISCIPLES REPRIMANDED
BY JESUS.

CONSIDERATIONS. The disciples, finding all their efforts useless to save the ship from being wrecked, *awaked him saying : Lord, save us, we perish* (2). *Master, doth it not concern thee that we perish? And rising up* (3)... *Jesus*

(1) Mark, iv, 38. — (2) Matt., viii, 25. — (3) Mark, iv, 38-39.

saith to them : Why are you fearful, O ye of little faith (1). Jesus does not reprove His disciples for having awakened Him; His reproof is for doubting His Providence; for believing that He was powerless to save them while He was asleep.

APPLICATIONS. Like the disciples, have recourse to Jesus in all your trials, and in your dangers, but be on your guard against delaying like them until the last moment. Be on your guard above all, against a vacillating faith, against ever doubting His Providence, or losing confidence when for your greater good He delays to grant your prayers and appears as One Who sleeps, not seeing your miseries nor hearing you. Have you not made this mistake? And is it not to this mistake that you must attribute your vain fears and your thoughts of discouragement which often are an offence against Divine Providence?

AFFECTIONS. Declarations of absolute confidence in the goodness and Fatherly Providence of God, especially towards those who have given themselves to Him with all their heart.

RESOLUTIONS. To say with David, in temptations of distrust : *The Lord ruleth me : and I shall want nothing* (2).

POINT III. — THE TEMPEST QUELLED BY A SINGLE WORD FROM JESUS.

CONSIDERATIONS. Jesus, who had raised this tempest merely to make it an occasion for manifesting His Divinity and to strengthen His disciples' confidence, made it cease with a

(1) *Matl.*, viii, 26. — (2) *Ps.* xxii, 1.

single word : *Rising up*, says St. Mark, *he rebuked the wind, and said to the sea : Peace. be still. And the wind ceased : and there was made a great calm... And they feared exceedingly : and they said one to another : Who is this (thinkest thou) that both wind and sea obey him (1)!*

APPLICATIONS. The Majesty and Omnipotence of our Divine Lord are manifested to us here in a most attractive and magnificent manner. Who does not at the thought of it feel happy and proud to belong to Him, and be on His side, and fight under His standard? Bless Him then for having revealed Himself to you; for having drawn and bound you to His service by the attractive and powerful inspirations of grace. Offer yourself to Him without reserve and without fear for the future.

COLLOQUY. It will consist in a continuance of this loving converse with our Lord.

MEDITATION XXVII.

A CONTINUATION OF THE SAME SUBJECT.

I. *Prelude.* See the disciples in the ship battling against the tempest.

II. *Prelude.* Ask for a deeper understanding of God's designs in regard to the government of the Church and of souls.

POINT I. — THE BARQUE OF PETER IS THE FIGURE
OF THE CHURCH.

CONSIDERATIONS. The barque of Peter is the figure of the Church. As it was battered by the

(1) Mark, iv, 39, 41.

raging waves throughout the night, the Church in the same way has always been exposed to the fury of hell and its satellites, and will be until the end of the world; until night, that is the shadows of faith, gives place to the radiance of the Beatific Vision. And as it seemed as though the ship must undoubtedly perish, so has the Church more than once seemed on the point of destruction. It was predicted as certain and imminent towards the end of the eighteenth century, and everything seemed to confirm the conjectures of unbelievers. But Jesus slept in the ship; it could not perish. At the moment ordained in the designs of His infinite wisdom, He arose, and rebuked the tempest and it ceased, to the wonder of the whole world. Thus in succeeding ages, ever assailed and threatened with shipwreck but ever victorious, the Church will continue her journey across the stormy sea of this world until she enters with all the elect into the port of blessed eternity.

APPLICATIONS. Let us be on our guard against being anxious or scandalised when we see our holy Mother the Church persecuted and at times oppressed or despoiled by victorious iniquity. This enters in'o the eternal designs of God in order, according to St. Augustine, that it may be proved for evermore that the Church is the work of God and not of men, that she may resemble her Divine Founder, and *through many tribulations*, says St. Luke, *...enter into the Kingdom of God* (1). In order that peace and temporal prosperity may not bring relaxation and corruption; — but that on the

(1) *Acts*, xiv, 22.

contrary, constantly harrassed by her enemies and continually purified by the fire of tribulation, she may preserve her strength and original beauty until the end.

AFFECTIONS. Admire... Praise... and adore the dep'h and wisdom of God's counsels regarding His Church. Form' fervent desires that she may extend her dominion and triumph in every part of the world.

RESOLUTIONS. In great tribulations of the Church, imitate the disciple's conduct and never separate human effort from prayer and constant recourse to the Divine Master, so that He may command the winds and the tempest.

POINT II. — THE BARQUE OF PETER IS THE TYPE
OF A FAITHFUL SOUL.

CONSIDERATIONS. The ship bearing the disciples and Jesus with them, yet assailed by the tempest, is also according to St. Augustine, the type of a faithful soul. For her too while united to matter and exposed on the stormy sea of the world, there is no lasting peace or security. *There is no time nor place when you are safe from the winds and tempest of temptation,* says Thomas a Kempis (1). When you think your peace is most firmly secured, when Jesus is nearest to you, perhaps immediately after a fervent Communion or a Retreat you will be suddenly overwhelmed by scruples, weariness, impure imaginations or the most horrible temptations which, like the waves of a raging sea, will threaten you with shipwreck. — But Jesus, who for your spiritual good, has permitted the

(1) *Imitation*, Bk. I. xiii

tempest, has also defined its limits. At His command, peace and serenity will return to your soul when you least expect them, and you will feel more deeply than ever that *the Lord is gracious and merciful* (1). The lives of the Saints frequently manifest these swift alternations of calm and tempest, consolation and desolation.

APPLICATIONS. Practical conclusions : First, never to count on perfect peace and security. — Secondly, to be prepared daily to be overtaken by a violent storm. — Thirdly, in times of desolation, and even of the most fierce assaults of the devil, never to doubt the Presence and assistance of Jesus Christ. — Fourthly, to take good care at such a time not to alter any of the resolutions you have made beforehand. Then to wake Jesus, and with a humble prayer to ask Him for help as the disciples did. — Finally, when calm has followed the tempest, examine your conduct. See to what extent you have been faithful to those rules dictated from experience by all the masters of the spiritual life, and make resolutions accordingly.

COLLOQUY. With our Divine Saviour. Let us ask Him to illumine us with the most vivid light of faith, that we may understand His mysterious Providence over the Church, and thus enable us to enlighten others and confirm them in the faith. Then let us ask Him as a great favour, for grace to ever conform our conduct to the practical conclusions indicated in the second Point of this meditation.

(1) Ps. CXLIV, 8.

MEDITATION XXVIII.

JESUS AMONGST THE GERASENS.

TWO DEMONIACS DELIVERED.

I. *Prelude.* See the demoniac at the feet of Jesus when He is saying these words : *Go out of the man, thou unclean spirit* (1).

II. *Prelude.* Ask for the grace of perfect chastity.

POINT I. — THE MISERY OF A GERASEN POSSESSED BY AN UNCLEAN SPIRIT.

CONSIDERATIONS. After having shown that the elements and all nature were subject to Him, Jesus desired to manifest the same power over evil spirits. The opportunity was not long in presenting itself. Hardly had He landed on the other side of the lake, in the country of the Gerasens, when two demoniacs came and threw themselves at His feet. One of them, says St. Mark explicitly, was *a man with an unclean spirit* (2). His condition was most miserable. The Evangelist apparently endeavours to make us realise by the details he gives us the misery of the man who allows himself to be dominated by sin or the demon of impurity : *He had burst the chains, and broken the fetters in pieces, and no one could tame him. And he was always day and night in the monuments and in the mountains, crying and cutting himself with stones* (3). *Possessed with devils... exceedingly fierce, so that none could pass by that way* (4). *He wore no clothes, neither did he*

(1) Mark, v, 8. — (2) Id., 2. — (3) Id., 4-5. — (4) Matt., vii., 28.

abide in a house, but in the sepulchres (1). *And he asked him : What is thy name? And he said to him : My name is Legion, for we are many* (2).

APPLICATIONS. Here is represented the wretched condition of the impure. Mad with passion as with untameable fury, nothing can restrain or chasten him : neither the loss of his reputation, nor the ruin of his health, nor the horror of the sacrilege, nor the thought of judgment or hell. — He obtains a hold on others, seeking to make them his accomplices and victims. — Unhappy is he who crosses his path, who makes a friend of him! — Legion is the true name of the demon of impurity. He is never alone, for he is accompanied by numberless vices. — Finally the nakedness, the isolation and savage cries of the demoniac bear witness to the description given by the Holy Spirit : *Man when he was in honour did not understand : he is compared to senseless beasts, and is become like unto them* (3), isolating himself from the world for he is unbearable to himself and laments his condition without having the power or the will to rise above it.

AFFECTIONS. Render unceasing thanksgivings to God for never having been under the domination of an unclean spirit, or if at any time you have fallen into its power, then from having been wholly freed from it. — Recommend yourself to Jesus and Mary, so that you may never be a victim to fatal illusions or false security.

RESOLUTIONS. To be always distrustful of self, whatever may be our age or our station.

(1) Luke, viii, 27. — (2) Mark, v, 9. — (3) Ps. xlviii, 13.

POINT II. — THE HAPPINESS OF THE GERASEN
AFTER HIS DELIVERANCE.

CONSIDERATIONS. Touched at the sight of the wretched demoniac, Jesus said in a loud voice : *Go out of the man, thou unclean spirit.* The demons forced to leave their prey, *besought him, saying : Send us into the swine... And Jesus immediately gave them leave (1)... and the herd with great violence was carried headlong into the sea, being about two thousand, and were stifled in the sea (2).* At the same instant, the demoniac became a different man, perfectly gentle and peaceable. The crowds that had assembled from all parts were astonished to see him... *sitting, clothed and well in his wits (3).* He, not knowing how to express his happiness and gratitude to Jesus, began to beseech Him that he might be with Him as His disciple. But *he admitted him not (4)* being content with his good will. He entrusted him with another apostolate by saying to him : *Go into thy house to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee... And he went his way, and began to publish in Decapolis (a country which comprised ten cities) how great things Jesus had done for him : and all men wondered (5).*

APPLICATIONS. Let us often think of all the wonders which Our Lord has done for us. Let us show our gratitude by proclaiming His greatness and His mercy.

(1) Either to show that everything is His, or to punish the scandal given by the Gerasens, or to prove that the devil has no power over us, nor over the things that are ours, except in so far as permitted by God.

(2) Mark, v, 12-13. — (3) Id., 15. — (4) Id., 19. — (5) Id., 19-20.

AFFECTIONS. *Let my mouth be filled with praise, that I may sing thy glory : thy greatness all the day long* (1).

RESOLUTIONS. To rouse myself frequently to humble gratitude by saying with the Apostle : *By the grace of God, I am what I am* (2).

POINT III. — THE BLINDNESS OF THE INHABITANTS
OF GERASENS.

CONSIDERATIONS. When the Gerasens were informed of what had taken place, and that they had lost their herd of swine they came to Jesus in crowds from the city, and they *besought him to depart from them : for they were taken with great fear* (3). Jesus punished their sordid and stupid selfishness by complying with their request... *And he going up into the ship returned back again* (4).

APPLICATIONS. Thank God for having been until now free from disastrous temptations of avarice. — Detach yourself ever more and more from all that is not God, or that does not lead to Him and to the eternal blessings promised you.

COLLOQUY. With the Saint whose feast is celebrated on this day.

MEDITATION XXIX.

JESUS RETURNS TO CAPHARNAUM.

THE CURE OF A PARALYTIC.

I. *Prelude.* See the paralytic carried on his bed to the feet of Jesus.

II. *Prelude.* Ask for the faith and confidence of the paralytic.

(1) *Ps.* LXX, 8. — (2) *1 Corin.*, xv, 10. — (3) *Luke*, viii, 37.
— (4) *Id*

POINT I. — THE ACTIVE FAITH OF THE PARALYTIC.

CONSIDERATIONS. The enthusiasm displayed by the inhabitants of Capharnaum at the return of Jesus made ample amends for the insult offered Him by the Gerasens. As soon as He returned to the city, and the house to which He retired became known, there gathered around Him such an immense number of people that it became impossible for any one to enter the house, especially for the bearers of those who were sick. Amongst these St. Mark expressly mentions *one sick of the palsy who was carried by four* (1). And St. Luke says : *And when they could not find by what way they might bring him in because of the multitude, they went up upon the roof, and let him down through the tiles with his bed into the midst before Jesus* (2).

APPLICATIONS. The ingenious expedient of the sick man to approach our Lord without delay both touches and charms us by its originality, boldness and promptitude. It pleased our Divine Lord and was crowned with success. How did this idea occur to the paralysed man? From his sufferings and from his desire that they should be ended. What do we fail to think of, what do we leave undone when we wish to recover our health? The author of the *Imitation* says that if we felt the pain and maladies of the soul as we do those of the body, we should find many expedients to remedy them, and should be prompt, active and persevering in putting them into practice. Our efforts would

(1) Mark, ii, 3. — (2) Luke, v, 19.

be successful, and we should finally rise from that spiritual paralysis which for many years has prevented us from making progress and which threatens to become incurable.

AFFECTIONS. Ask for grace to realise your spiritual miseries more clearly in order to remedy them with more promptitude and more energy.

RESOLUTIONS. To put the good intentions with which God inspires us, promptly into practice.

POINT II. — THE SPIRITUAL HEALING OF THE PARALYTIC.

CONSIDERATIONS. *And Jesus seeing their faith,* continues St. Matt. : *said to the man sick of the palsy : Be of good heart, son, thy sins are forgiven thee* (1). The paralysed man had only come to seek his health of body, and Our Lord granted him the health of his soul as well. He aroused contrition in his heart for all his sins, and granted him entire remission of them. Why does Our Lord desire that the soul should be healed before the body? To make the world understand that His chief end was to cure and save souls, and for this very reason, to remind each of us in particular, that the salvation and sanctification of our souls should be of infinitely greater importance to us than the health of our bodies. -

APPLICATIONS. You understand the wisdom and importance of the lesson, or rather the advice given here by your Divine Master; but do you always act in accordance with it? Is it quite true that you are habitually more interested in the welfare of your soul than in the

(1) Matt., ix, 2.

comfort of your body? Examine your thoughts, words and actions. Do your first thoughts on waking, refer to your soul or your body? How many times during the day do you think of the one-how many times of the other? — And your conversations? — Do they not turn far more on the sufferings of your body and on the means of relieving them than on your spiritual miseries and the means of remedying them? Then in practice, how much indulgence do you grant to your body with great detriment to your soul?

AFFECTIONS. Acknowledge, mourn and detest your dreadful blindness.

RESOLUTIONS. In saying these words : *Give us this day our daily bread*, I shall think first of the needs of my soul and of the care it requires.

POINT III. — THE BODILY CURE OF THE PARALYTIC.

CONSIDERATIONS. The spiritual cure of the paralytic was swiftly followed by the healing of his body. By this cure which was so manifestly miraculous, Jesus desired to prove to all, but chiefly to the Scribes and Pharisees that He was really God, that He had in reality the power to forgive sins, a fact contested by the Scribes. That is why He says to them : *But that you may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins (he saith to the sick of the palsy). I say to thee, Arise, take up thy bed, and go into thy house. And immediately he arose : and taking up his bed, went his way (1). And the multitude seeing it,*

(1) Mark, II, 10-12.

feared, and glorified God that gave such power to men (1).

APPLICATIONS. Jesus Christ has bequeathed to the priests of the New Law this same power to forgive our sins without placing any restriction on this wonderful delegation of power. Have you frequently testified your gratitude for such a glorious benefit? If you have failed in such an important and simple duty, try to make amends for your negligence.

COLLOQUY. With Jesus, in accordance with the *affections* and *resolutions* of the first two Points.

MEDITATION XXX.

THE VOCATION OF ST. MATTHEW

TO THE APOSTOLATE.

I. *Prelude.* Hear Jesus when He says to Matthew : *Follow me.*

II. *Prelude.* Ask for grace to be faithful to all that is demanded from you by the duties of the state to which you have been called.

POINT I. — THE WONDERFUL VOCATION OF ST. MATTHEW.

CONSIDERATIONS. On leaving Capharnaum Jesus *went forth again to the sea-side... and when he was passing by he saw Levi the son of Alpheus sitting at the receipt of custom; and he saith to him : Follow me (2).* A man... *named Matthew (3).* Everything was remarkable and wonderful in this vocation, but in the first place, what was he who was chosen? A publican and gatherer of the Roman taxes, an

(1) Matt., ix, 8. — (2) Mark, ii, 13-14. — (3) Matt., ix, 9.

employment which made him contemptible and odious to his fellow citizens, as it afforded him facilities for satisfying a craving for wealth and the enjoyments of life, for fraud could be easily practised. Then when did Jesus call him? At the very moment when he was seated at his table counting his unjust gains. How does He call him? As though accidentally by a look, and these two words : *Follow me*.

APPLICATIONS. Recall the various circumstances of your conversion, of the mysterious change effected in you by grace, and you also will probably find much that is remarkable. First, that you should have heard the voice of God calling you, rather than so many others more worthy than you; and then, that it should have penetrated to the depths of your heart at the very time when perhaps you were indulging in some sin or selfish plans : does this not denote a marked predilection for you on God's part? What should you think of it?

AFFECTIONS. Ask your holy patrons and your good angel to unite with you in praising and thanking the Lord your God.

RESOLUTIONS. In times of desolation, I will recall the marvellous manifestations of grace in my vocation to a more perfect life.

POINT II. — THE WONDERFUL FIDELITY OF ST. MATTHEW.

CONSIDERATIONS. St. Matthew's fidelity and promptness in corresponding to his vocation are no less wonderful than his vocation itself. As soon as he heard the voice of Jesus, says the Gospel, *he arose up and followed him* (1).

(1) Matt., ix, 9.

Julian the apostate denounces this account as false or foolish. It certainly cannot be explained except by taking into account the all-powerful operations of grace which in an instant can change a material, sensual, and avaricious man into one who is spiritual, mortified and wholly disinterested. The world has frequently witnessed these miracles of grace, but it does not understand them; it cannot understand them because faith is necessary, and without faith they are inexplicable. Happy are those who not only understand them, but who also experience them!

APPLICATIONS. Are you not amongst these latter? How many wonders has grace effected in you, independently of you, and it might be said, in spite of you? Even at the time that you resisted grace, when you only sought and thought of the enjoyments and pleasures of the world, it suddenly illumined you; you were made to see the nothingness of all that is not God, of all that is not eternal; it made you understand, appreciate and follow the invitation of Jesus Christ : *Come to me... Take up my yoke upon you... and you shall find rest to your souls* (1).

AFFECTIONS. I shall rejoice with Our Blessed Lady, remembering the great things effected in me by grace : *He that is mighty hath done great things to me* (2).

RESOLUTIONS. In temptations of pusillanimity I will think of what I am able to do with the assistance of grace.

(1) Matt., xi, 28-29. — (2) Luke, i, 49.

POINT III. — ST. MATTHEW'S REMARKABLE GRATITUDE.

CONSIDERATIONS. Enlightened by grace, Matthew understood the inestimable blessing of his vocation. He sought for means to demonstrate his immense gratitude before God and man, so he decided to offer Jesus a splendid banquet, which He deigned to accept. *Levi made him a great feast in his own house* (1), says St. Luke, and St. Mark adds : *many publicans and sinners sat down together with Jesus and his disciples* (2). The new disciple invited them in order to win them all for his Master, and to attract even a few of them to voluntary poverty, that they might follow his example. In this way he gave Jesus a double pledge of his gratitude.

APPLICATIONS. If you desire to show your gratitude for the great and numberless blessings God has lavished upon you, imitate St. Matthew. Take advantage too of every opportunity of bringing men to God and of winning them over to His side; of interesting them in works which have as their aim the propagation of good literature and good schools, the propagation and preservation of sound doctrine among the people, the conversion of sinners, etc. See what you can do in this respect, and ask for grace to do it with success.

COLLOQUY. With the new Apostle of the Saviour. — Rejoice with him. Beg him to obtain for you a generous heart and an ardent love for Jesus Christ, and perfection in your life.

(1) Luke, v, 29. — (2) Mark, ii, 15.

MEDITATION XXXI.

THE EXCELLENCE

OF THE RELIGIOUS VOCATION.

I. *Prelude.* Recall the subject of the preceding meditation, or the chief circumstances of St. Matthew's vocation to the practice of evangelical counsels.

II. *Prelude.* Ask for grace to understand the excellence of the religious vocation, and to make it esteemed by those who are blinded by lamentable prejudices.

Three things especially prove the excellence of vocation to the religious life.

POINT I. — THE ORIGIN OF RELIGIOUS PROFESSION.

CONSIDERATIONS. It can be said that the origin of religious vocation, or the resolve to immolate self on the altar of God's love by the three vows of religion is heavenly and Divine. Indeed, the thought of leaving all that is dearest to the heart of man : parents, fortune, pleasure and liberty, in order to embrace a life full of privations and sacrifices, could not have come to man of his own accord, for it is too much opposed to all his natural inclinations. Neither could it have come to him from the world that considers it madness; still less from the devil who abhors it; therefore it has come, and could only come from God. Moreover, it is what Jesus Christ teaches when He says to the Apostles who first submitted gladly, and dedicated themselves willingly to the yoke of voluntary poverty, perfect chastity and obedience : *You have not chosen me; but I have chosen you* (1). And elsewhere : *All men take*

(1) John, xv, 16.

not this word (of perfect chastity) but they to whom it is given (1).

APPLICATIONS. This consideration is one which should give you an exalted idea of religious profession, of vocation to the practice of evangelical counsels. Perhaps in your innermost heart you are attracted to this vocation. If so, give thanks to God but do not decide lightly : pray, ask for advice, and keep your heart pure. If you do not feel this attraction, or if you are no longer free, at least may the example of the penances and heroic sacrifices made in the cloister by so many generous souls, urge you to live in a holy manner wherever you have been placed by God.

AFFECTIONS. These will consist in expressing at the feet of Jesus the feelings aroused in your heart by these reflections.

RESOLUTIONS. I shall defend the religious state, and those who have embraced it, whenever I can do it to advantage.

POINT II. — THE AIM AND ADVANTAGES
OF RELIGIOUS VOCATION.

CONSIDERATIONS. What is the aim of the religious vocation or profession? Ask those young girls, and so many young men to whom the world offers a brilliant future, why they are entering religion and they will answer that it is to escape the dangers and temptations of the world; to avoid offending God, and to secure the eternal salvation of numberless souls; to attain a high degree of glory and happiness in heaven by becoming as much as possible con-

(1) Matt., XIX, 11.

formable to Jesus Christ by practising the evangelical counsels, and to belong wholly to God and become saints. These are in reality the advantages of the religious life.

APPLICATIONS. Another advantage of religious institutions which is never taken into consideration by the ungrateful world is that, thanks to so many souls who spend their lives in prayer and penance, God does not treat us according to our wickedness, nor does He let fall on the earth the dread effects of His just vengeance provoked by innumerable sins every day. If at the time of Abraham, ten just men had been found, the fire of heaven would have spared the inhabitants of the five sinful cities.

AFFECTIONS. Acts of faith on the truths on which you have been meditating, and of thankfulness for the longanimity Our Lord has shown you.

RESOLUTIONS. To make those who vilify monastic institutions as useless to the world, understand that not only do they misunderstand but that they also condemn that of which they are ignorant; and those to whom they owe their lives and their possessions.

POINT III. — THE REWARD PROMISED TO THE RELIGIOUS VOCATION.

CONSIDERATIONS. In order to appreciate yet more fully the excellence of the religious profession, consider the promises attached to it by Our Divine Saviour, the just appraiser of our actions : *There is no man who hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or children, or lands for my sake and for the gospel (or evangelical perfection), who shall*

not receive an hundred times as much, nor in this time; ...and in the world to come life everlasting (1).

APPLICATIONS. To approach as closely as you can to evangelical perfection, and to share as abundantly as possible in the magnificent rewards attached to it by Our Lord, keep yourself with great care from the contagion of the world; detach your heart from the earth, and in all your possessions see nothing but means of salvation. Be ever ready to sacrifice them to God whenever He may ask them from you.

COLLOQUY. With Our Blessed Lady who, though she lived in the world and always observed social customs, yet has given us a perfect model of Christian perfection, a perfection to which we can all aspire, whatever may be our position in the world.

MEDITATION XXXII.

THE RAISING OF THE DAUGHTER OF JAIRUS.

I. *Prelude.* See Jesus taking the daughter of Jairus by the hand, and raising her to life.

II. *Prelude.* Ask for lively faith and unbounded confidence in prayer.

POINT I. — THE PRAYER OF JAIRUS.

CONSIDERATIONS. The day following St. Matthew's vocation, *there cometh one of the rulers of the synagogue named Jairus (2) : And he fell down at the feet of Jesus, beseeching him that he would come into his house. For he had*

(1) Mark, x, 29, 30. — (2) Mark, v, 22.

an only daughter almost twelve years old, and she was dying (1). The prayer of Jairus was pleasing to Jesus and it obtained a miracle. Let us consider its qualities so that we may profit by them. First, it was humble and respectful; — that is proved by the words and attitude of the suppliant father. — Secondly, it was fervent and tender, coming from the heavy heart of an afflicted father. Lastly, it was simple and trustful, for Jairus merely explained the cause of his grief and his reason for coming to Jesus, and trusted for the rest to the tenderness of His Heart.

APPLICATIONS. Have your prayers the same qualities? Are they accompanied by this deep humility, by this great interior and exterior reverence due to the Infinite Majesty of God? Are they fervent, coming from a heart which realises its misery, and the impossibility of any remedy? Are they not often lacking in this sincerity, or simplicity and confidence which should be so natural in a child appealing to his father? — Seek for an answer to these questions, and there you will find at the same time, the answer to that too common complaint which perhaps is your own also : I pray but receive nothing.

AFFECTIONS. *Lord, teach us to pray* (2).

RESOLUTIONS. To find out what has been lacking in our prayers, and successfully remedy it.

POINT II. — THE FAITH OF JAIRUS.

CONSIDERATIONS. The faith of Jairus was

(1) Luke, viii, 11-12. — (2) Id., xi, 1.

subjected to a severe trial, for while he was returning to his house accompanied by Jesus, *there cometh one of the rulers of the synagogue, saying to him, Thy daughter is dead, trouble him not* (1). But Jairus did not lose confidence and said to Jesus : *Lord, my daughter is even now dead ; but come, lay thy hand upon her, and she shall live* (2). *Jesus hearing this word, answered the father of the maid, Fear not : believe only* (persevere in your faith) *and she shall be safe* (3). We do not know what to admire most in this Gospel narrative, the faith of Jairus, or the promptness with which Jesus granted the prayer and rewarded the faith of the ruler of the synagogue.

APPLICATIONS. From admiration let us pass on to imitation. Let us imitate the faith and trustfulness of Jairus, or rather the constancy of his faith and trust, for it is this constancy above all which often is lacking in us; the least difficulty discourages us whereas the confidence of Jairus increased when we should have thought that circumstances would have shaken it. Then imitate the promptitude of our Divine Lord in acceding to the request of Jairus and immediately render any service that is demanded of us. Who gives promptly, gives doubly, says the proverb. To have to be asked several times lessens the merit of a good action before God and before men. Will not these reflections cause you to reform your conduct?

AFFECTIONS. Ask for an increase of faith and fraternal charity.

(1) Luke, viii, 49. — (2) Matt., ix, 18. — (3) Luke, viii, 50.

RESOLUTIONS. To repeat this petition of the Apostles frequently : *Lord, increase our faith* (1).

POINT III. — A MIRACLE WAS ACCORDED TO THE PETITION AND FAITH OF JAIRUS.

CONSIDERATIONS. *And when Jesus was come into the house of the ruler* (2), says the Gospel, *he entereth in where the damsel was lying. And taking the damsel by the hand, he saith to her : « Talitha cumi », which is being interpreted : Damsel, (I say to thee) arise* (3). *And her spirit returned, and she rose immediately. And he bid them give her to eat. And her parents were astonished* (4).

APPLICATIONS. *And the same hereof adds St. Matthew, went abroad into all that country* (5). That is not in the least surprising. What miracle indeed could cause a greater sensation than the raising of the dead to life? Nevertheless, St. Bernard says there is a miracle yet greater, the resurrection, the real, lasting conversion of an inveterate sinner. Has God perhaps performed this miracle for you? A miracle no less great, adds the holy Doctor, is the resurrection, the real conversion of a devout soul enriched by gifts of grace, who gradually has fallen away from his first fervour and become wholly worldly and self-indulgent. If such a miracle is needed in your case do not despair of obtaining it. We have seen that everything is possible if prayer is united to faith and confidence.

(1) Luke, xvii, 5. — (2) Matt., ix, 23. — (3) Mark, v, 40-41.
— (4) Luke, viii, 55-56. — (5) Matt., ix, 26.

COLLOQUY. With our good angel, the witness of the many favours we have received from God's liberality in spite of our infidelities.

MEDITATION XXXIII.

THREE MIRACLES OF HEALING.

I. *Prelude.* See Jesus surrounded by the sick and suffering.

II. *Prelude.* Ask for grace to grow in the knowledge and love of Jesus.

POINT I. — THE MIRACULOUS HEALING OF THE ISSUE OF BLOOD.

CONSIDERATIONS. On the same day that Jesus raised Jairus's daughter to life, He manifested His power and goodness by three other miracles which will form the subject of this meditation. The first was that of *a woman who was under an issue of blood twelve years... When she had heard of Jesus... she said : If I shall touch but his garment, I shall be whole* (1). And she came behind him, and touched the hem of his garment... And the woman was made whole from that hour (2). It must be acknowledged that the means conceived and carried out by this woman to obtain her recovery were little in accordance with the rules of human wisdom. Probably she hesitated herself some time before having recourse to them. She did however obey an inspiration from heaven which was the cause of her happiness.

APPLICATIONS. These reflections lead up to an

(1) Mark, v, 25-28. — (2) Matt., ix, 20-22.

important practical conclusion, namely that we should not lightly abandon any good intention when ideas supervene which represent it in an unfavourable light. « It will often happen, says the author of the *Spiritual Exercises*, that after having conceived and arranged a good project, you will be tempted to abandon it : it will appear strange, compromising, dictated by vanity, or it will seem too difficult or impossible to carry out. These are the apprehensions presented by the enemy of good. Scorn them, and go forward. » It is not by regulating our steps according to the dictates of human wisdom that we obtain miracles, or do great things.

AFFECTIONS. Ask for grace to be guided by the Spirit of God, even in spite of human wisdom if necessary.

RESOLUTIONS. To be constant in our intentions and resolutions.

POINT II. — THE MIRACULOUS CURE OF TWO BLIND MEN.

CONSIDERATIONS. *And as Jesus passed from thence (the house of Jairus) there followed him two blind men crying out and saying, Have mercy on us, O Son of David. Jesus seemed to pay no attention to them ; He continued on His way. And when he was come to the house, the blind men came to him. And Jesus saith to them, Do you believe, that I can do this unto you? They say to him, Yea Lord. Then he touched their eyes saying, According to your faith, be it done unto you. And their eyes were opened.*(1).

(1) Matt., ix, 27-30.

APPLICATIONS. Following the example of the blind men let us take advantage of the moments of grace and Divine favours. - - My God, why have I not done this more faithfully? What treasures would be mine if I had! — Let us persevere in our prayers, even though they seem not to be heard or granted; — but above all, let us make fervent acts of faith in the power and goodness of our Divine Redeemer. He seems to make this faith the chief condition, and the measure of His gifts. *According to your faith, be it done unto you* (1).

AFFECTIONS. Ask for the true spirit of prayer.

RESOLUTIONS. Let us always try to say with devotion the prayer of the two blind men, which is introduced into the liturgy of the Church: *Lord, have mercy on us.*

POINT III. — THE MIRACULOUS CURE OF A DUMB MAN
POSSESSED WITH A DEVIL.

CONSIDERATIONS. Hardly had Jesus cured the two blind men, when *they brought him a dumb man possessed with a devil* (2). This man was suffering from a double affliction and was the more deserving of pity because his condition prevented him from arousing the interest of Jesus by the recital of his misery, since the devil kept his tongue bound. Fortunately some charitable persons spoke for him, and the Heart of Jesus was moved with compassion. He cast out the devil, and *the dumb man spoke* (3).

APPLICATIONS. Let us pity those who are rendered dumb by the devil in the confessional, during prayer, or when duty or charity should

(1) Matt., ix, 27-30. — (2) Id., 32. — (3) Id., 33.

make them speak. Have you nothing with which to reproach yourself in this respect? Besides, let us be on our guard against want of sympathy or indifference to the sufferings of others. Let us help them as much as we can, and let us imitate the gracious charity of Jesus, especially towards those who have a right to our compassion, but who are hindered from asking for assistance by reserve or other motives.

COLLOQUY. With the Apostles Sts. Peter and Paul, whose feast is celebrated on one of the last days of this month; let us earnestly ask them to obtain for us the grace to become like them, faithful and perfect imitators of Jésus Christ, remembering the words of St. Paul : *I beseech you, be ye followers of me, as I also am of Christ* (1).

THE END OF THE INTERCALAR MONTH,
AND OF THE FIRST HALF-YEAR.

(1) *I Corin.*, iv, 16.

FIRST FRIDAYS OF THE MONTH.

(Taken from the Novena of the Sacred Heart, page 498,
and following.)

THE MONTH OF JANUARY.

ON DEVOTION TO THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS.

I. *Prelude.* See Jesus Christ showing His Heart and saying: *Behold this Heart which has so loved men.*

II. *Prelude.* Ask for a real and tender devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

POINT I. — THE OBJECT OF DEVOTION TO THE SACRED HEART.

CONSIDERATIONS. The material or sensible object of this devotion is the Heart of the Incarnate Word, inseparably united to His Humanity and His Divinity, and as supremely adorable as Jesus Christ Himself with Whom it is identified. The spiritual or abstract object is the love of Jesus Christ, of which His Heart is a symbol. Therefore whatever way we may consider it, the object of this devotion is beautiful, holy and excellent. It is the Heart of a God Who loves us; it is Jesus Christ Himself contemplated in the most noble organ of His Humanity, and in the most glorious attribute of His Divinity—His Love!

APPLICATIONS. This consideration will inflame

us with love for the adorable Heart of Jesus, and make us seek every means of spreading devotion to it. This is the devotion of the first Fridays of the month. What do we undertake in this devotion? First, to maintain the fervour of those who are members of the Confraternity of the Sacred Heart of Jesus; — secondly, to remind men of all the gratitude they owe to this God made Man who suffered so much for them; — thirdly, to maintain and increase devotion to the Sacred Heart by public acts of devotion, celebrated with much solemnity, and terminated by an act of reparation; — finally, to consecrate the beginning of each new month to the Heart of Jesus in order to receive fresh graces.

AFFECTIONS. At the feet of my loving Saviour, I shall declare my fervent desire to attain the aims of this day's devotion fully.

RESOLUTIONS. To help me to attain them, I shall place a representation of the Sacred Heart before me, and during the day I shall often repeat the pious aspiration : *O sweet Heart of Jesus, make me love Thee more and more.*

POINT II. — SOME MOTIVES FOR DEVOTION
TO THE SACRED HEART.

CONSIDERATIONS. Motives with respect to Jesus Christ. — No devotion can be more pleasing to Him because it reminds us incessantly of what He has done and suffered for us. His Heart is similar to ours. We are pleased if services we have rendered are remembered, and He is pleased also, for His words prove it. On the eve of His death, in giving

His Apostles power to consecrate, He said to them : *Do this for a commemoration of me* (1).

Motives with respect to ourselves. — In devotion to the Sacred Heart we shall find a most efficacious means of maintaining an interior life; — of paying the debt of gratitude claimed from us most justly by Our Divine Lord; — of preserving and increasing our fervour in His service; — of obtaining for ourselves, and for those entrusted to our care, an abundance of graces of which the Sacred Heart is the inexhaustible source.

APPLICATIONS. These are good reasons for every true Christian to cultivate devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus with great care, and gladly to take advantage of opportunities to inculcate it in others. How have you done it? Must you not reproach yourself with coldness and negligence?

AFFECTIONS. Ask for an increase of devotion to the Sacred Heart.

RESOLUTIONS. To use every means with renewed fervour of making this devotion known and loved.

POINT III. — THE PRACTICE OF THIS DAY'S DEVOTION
IS SPECIALLY CONSECRATED TO THE SACRED HEART.

CONSIDERATIONS. In what should you make the practice of this day's devotion consist? In doing what is done by all faithful in honour of the Sacred Heart, but with all the fervour of which you are capable, in particular by receiving Holy Communion; — in being as recollected as possible, ever keeping in mind

(1) Luke, xxii, 19.

the thought of the loving-kindness and the sufferings of the Heart of Jesus; — in sanctifying this day not only by Holy Communion, but also by some acts of mortification, or of supererogatory devotions such as the Stations of the Cross; — in considering what way you can improve during this month on what you have done in the preceding month, in order to please the Heart of Jesus.

APPLICATIONS. Resolve to be faithful to these practices. Offer them to the Heart of Jesus by the mediation of your guardian angel.

COLLOQUY. With the same heavenly spirit.

SERIES OF MEDITATIONS (1)

FOR THE FIRST FRIDAY OF THE MONTH
CONTINUATION.

MONTH OF FEBRUARY.

MEDITATION. — Our duties towards the Heart of Jesus dwelling with us in the most holy Sacrament of the Eucharist. PAGE 530.

MONTH OF MARCH.

MEDITATION. — The wondrous purity of the Heart of Jesus. » 505.

MONTH OF APRIL.

MEDITATION. — The extraordinary humility of the Heart of Jesus. » 509.

MONTH OF MAY.

MEDITATION. — The admirable zeal of the Heart of Jesus. » 523.

MONTH OF JUNE.

MEDITATION. — The goodness and tenderness of the Heart of Jesus. » 526.

(1) The meditations recommended here are arranged for the Novena preceding the Feast of the Sacred Heart; they are, however very appropriate for the first Friday of the month, by means of some slight alterations. — All the meditations of the *Preludes*, and all of Point III of the preceding meditation (page 649) can be used.

SOME MEDITATIONS

FOR DAY OF COMMUNION.

FIRST MEDITATION.

PREPARATION FOR HOLY COMMUNION.

I. *Prelude.* Hear Jesus Christ saying to the Apostles : *Take ye and eat : this is my body which shall be delivered for you* (1).

II. *Prelude.* Earnestly ask for the dispositions which are necessary for Holy Communion : namely, vivid faith, profound humility, and great confidence.

POINT I. — VIVID FAITH.

CONSIDERATIONS. If you wish your Communion to be accompanied with great devotion, and followed by good results, see that it is preceded by serious preparation, and your desire will be fulfilled. — Preliminary preparation comprises : confession, always useful and sometimes necessary (2); — care to prepare your meditation with the thought of Communion; — care to go to sleep and to awaken with the thought of this great act; — an ardent desire to perform this great and solemn act really well. — It is also useful to make your intention then for applying the plenary indulgence which can be gained.

Immediate preparation before Communion consists in being animated above all with faith concerning the Real Presence of Jesus Christ

(1) *I Corin.*, xi, 24.
chap. vii.

(2) Council of Trent, Sess. XIII,

in the Blessed Sacrament. In this everything depends on faith. Without faith, you see nothing but a morsel of bread. Consequently what devotion could you have? But with the eyes of faith you see Jesus Christ; you see God. O! if you saw Him in a perceptible form when you approach the altar, with what holy ecstasy you would be filled! A vivid faith should produce what such a miracle would do.

APPLICATIONS. Try to strengthen and increase your faith, saying with the afflicted father in the Gospel : « *Credo, Domine* ». *Lord, I believe that I am going to receive Thee; Thee, God and Man, though hidden from my eyes; I do believe because Thou hast said it far more than for the reason that extraordinary miracles have proved it. I do believe, and am ready to seal it with my blood as so many martyrs have done. I do believe, Lord; help my unbelief* (1).

AFFECTIONS. Ask for this faith with fervent prayers.

RESOLUTIONS. To read from time to time some work on the Holy Eucharist.

POINT II. — PROFOUND HUMILITY.

CONSIDERATIONS. A man who is filled with vivid faith in the Real Presence of Jesus Christ, of a God of Infinite holiness and majesty, will also be filled with profound humility, which is the second disposition which should render us pleasing to Jesus. He will be firmly convinced of his unworthiness. This conviction is well expressed by the Church in these words of the Centurion, which she places on the lips of those

(1) Mark, ix, 23.

who are about to receive Communion : « *Domine, non sum dignus ut intres sub tectum meum* ». Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldst enter under my roof (1).

APPLICATIONS. Be recollected therefore : examine and reflect on your past life — so many sins, so much ingratitude. — Your present life with so many stains on your soul : so much lukewarmness, so many imperfections in the little you do for God, and you will exclaim with the most profound conviction : O Jesus, I am unworthy — altogether unworthy to approach Thee, even to lift up my eyes to Thee. I adore Thee, and I annihilate myself before Thee. But how can I dare to draw near Thee ?

AFFECTIONS. Retain these feelings of humility and acknowledge your spiritual misery like the pious author of the *Imitation* (2).

RESOLUTIONS. To stand before God as a servant accused and ashamed of having served his good master so imperfectly.

POINT III. — GREAT CONFIDENCE AND GREAT DESIRE.

CONSIDERATIONS. *Come to me, all you that labour, and are burdened, and I will refresh you* (3). Whatever fear may overwhelm us, these words of Jesus bring comfort; comfort is restored in our hearts, and we see that the weaker and more miserable we are, the more right we have to receive Holy Communion; we long for the moment when we shall receive Him from Whom we can expect so many good things.

APPLICATIONS. Confidence and desire are the

(1) Matt., viii, 8. — (2) Book IV, vii. — (3) Matt., xi, 28.

two feelings which the good Physician of our souls loves above all to find in the hearts of the faithful who are preparing to receive Him. Endeavour therefore to produce these acts by saying : O Sweet and loving Saviour, Thou callest the weak and wretched to Thee; Thou dost invite them to sit at Thy Table; therefore I believe I have more right than any one to approach Thee, since I am the most sinful, the most wretched of all. Come then, O Jesus, come, heal and enrich me. My soul longs for Thee as the sick man longs for the coming of his physician; as the hungry poor long for the coming of their benefactor. O come, come, for without Thee I cannot live!

COLLOQUY. With Our Blessed Lady. Say to her with St. Peter Claver : « *O my beloved Mother, communicate to my heart a spark of the love which inflames thy own, or rather lend me for some moments, thy heart in which to receive and harbour Jesus thy Divine Son and my Saviour* » (1).

SECOND MEDITATION.

PIOUS PRACTICES

FOR RECEIVING COMMUNION WITH DEVOTION.

CONSIDERATIONS. A matter which shames, pains and frightens us is that we are usually so dry and cold in our Communions, never or hardly ever experiencing the sweet emotions and holy joy experienced by many devout people. In order to have no cause for reproach,

(1) *Life of St. Peter Claver*. Edit. Liege, 1852, p. 56.

or rather to share in the happiness of these faithful souls let us imitate them with simplicity in certain pious practices which their fervour has suggested to them. These are some of them :

I. — THE NIGHT BEFORE COMMUNION.

When they are in bed before going to sleep, they count the hours which separate them from the moment of Holy Communion, and say to themselves : So many hours more and the God of heaven and earth will be here in my heart. With God I shall be rich with a happiness not possessed by the angels. How wonderful : — O how I long for the hour to come : How I wish I could at least spend this night in preparing myself by prayer. — O my good angel, my holy patron Saint, do for me what I am unable to do for myself.

II. — ON AWAKING IN THE MORNING.

They imagine they hear from the lips of Jesus these words which He once spoke to Zachæus : *Make haste and come down : for this day I must abide in thy house* (1), in the house of thy heart. Thrilled with joy at these words, they answer : O Jesus, the honour and happiness is too great ! How does this special favour come to me who am so poor and so wretched ? Rejoice, O my soul ; your miseries are coming to an end : fulness and joy will be yours ! — My God, if only I had a heart full of burning love for Thee, pure at least from every stain of sin ! — Then while washing and dressing, they

(1) Luke, xix, 5.

say : *Amplius lava me, Domine* (1). Lord, wash every stain from my soul, clothe it with a nuptial robe and adorn it with virtues.

III. — FOR THE LAST QUARTER OF AN HOUR
BEFORE COMMUNION.

They try to make acts of faith, humility, confidence and desire with intense devotion, as recommended in the preceding meditation. — Then with great simplicity they ask their good angel and their patron Saint to take them into the banquet-hall, and to accompany them to the holy Table.

IV. — AT THE TIME OF COMMUNION.

They imagine their hearts as having suddenly become like another stable in Bethlehem, where the Saviour has just been born, and they prostrate themselves at His feet with Our Lady, St. Joseph, the angels, the shepherds, and the Kings, giving full expression to their wonder, adoration, humility, gratitude, joy, love, hope and supplication.

V. — AFTER HOLY COMMUNION.

The moments following Communion, says St. Teresa, are the most precious in life. Even if a whole hour is spent in thanksgiving it always seems too short to devout souls. How do they spend the time? In the affections we have enumerated; in various acts recommended in all prayer books; in saying the prayers for gaining indulgences; in renewing their good resolutions, but above all in offering themselves

(1) Ps. l., 4.

entirely and absolutely, all the senses of their bodies and all the faculties of their souls, — an offering accompanied by the firm determination to take certain measures in order to make a more holy use of them henceforward. — But the zealous Christian does not concentrate all his thoughts on himself, and inflamed with the fire of Divine love, his desire is for the triumph of the cause of Jesus Christ, and of the souls redeemed by His Blood in all parts of the world. With this intention, he asks the angels and all the saints in heaven to unite with him in order to obtain the fulfilment of the prayers of the Sovereign Pontiff, of Bishops, priests and missionaries who work for him throughout the world — to obtain the conversion of the heathen — the humiliation of the enemies of the Church — to obtain the extirpation of schisms and heresies, — unity and true peace between kings and Christian princes by their return to religious unity — and the complete triumph of the Church.

NOTE. — This expansive way of praying, besides being pleasing to Jesus, has yet this advantage, that it raises us above our petty miseries, widens our thoughts, and enlarges our hearts. Moreover, after the 5th Meditation, read the chapters recommended in the *Imitation* which uplift the soul, and fill it with devotion.

To assure themselves that their prayers will be effectual, the faithful do not fail to have recourse to the powerful intercession of Mary; at her feet they lay all the human race, terribly disfigured by sin and undermined by unbelief, and they implore her to save the world. Then appealing to Jesus, they remind Him of the unparalleled honours rendered to His holy Mother by the Catholic world at the time of the

promulgation of the dogma of her Immaculate Conception, and in return ask Him to bring into the fold of the Church all the nations of the earth (naming them if time permits).

THIRD MEDITATION.

THE LAST SUPPER

OR THE FIRST COMMUNION OF THE APOSTLES

I. *Prelude.* See Jesus in the midst of His Apostles at the Last Supper.

II. *Prelude.* Ask for an increase of faith and love.

POINT I. — THE INSTITUTION OF THE LORD'S SUPPER
OR HOLY COMMUNION.

CONSIDERATIONS. These are the words with which the inspired authors relate the circumstances of the great event of the institution of the Eucharist, of the Priesthood, and of Holy Communion :

The Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed... After having washed the Apostles' feet and seated Himself at table... took bread, and giving thanks, broke and said : Take ye and eat : this is my body which shall be delivered for you ; this do for the commemoration of me (1). In like manner the chalice also (2). He gave thanks : and gave to them, saying : Drink ye all of this. For this is my blood... which shall be shed for many unto remission of sins (3). And they all drank of it (4).

(1) I Corin., xi, 23-24. — (2) Luke, xxii, 20. — (3) Matt., xxvi, 27-28. — (4) Mark, xiv, 23.

APPLICATIONS. Two things especially impress and charm us on considering this great event which we see taking place as it were, before our eyes, so distinctly are the facts related : the infinite and unspeakable love of Jesus Christ who gives Himself as Food to men, and the no less unspeakable happiness of the Apostles, who suddenly became living tabernacles of Divinity, and transformed, so to speak, into God. — O my soul ! a few moments only and the miracle of love which was performed at the Last Supper shall be renewed in you, and you will possess the same happiness as the Apostles ! A few moments only and Jesus will come, and He will say through His priest : *Eat; this is my body.*

AFFECTIONS. Acts of faith, — reverence, — humility, — hope, — and desire.

RESOLUTIONS. To endeavour during the day to keep the glorious scene of the Supper before your eyes.

POINT II. — THE WORDS WHICH PRECEDED THE INSTITUTION OF HOLY COMMUNION.

CONSIDERATIONS. As the Sacrament of the Eucharist and Holy Communion is the mystery of mysteries, the most stupendous of miracles, Jesus prepared His disciples long beforehand to believe it. We see that from the second year of His ministry He made it a subject of His instruction. Let us listen attentively to what He tells us of it, according to the testimony of St. John the Evangelist : *Your fathers did eat manna in the desert, and are dead... I am the living bread which came down from heaven. The bread that I will give you is my flesh for*

the life of the world. — Here the Evangelist, interrupting Our Lord's words, says : *The Jews therefore strove among themselves saying : How can this man give us his flesh to eat? Then Jesus said to them : (not enlightening them further, but confirming the statement of the reality of His Presence) Amen, amen, I say unto you : Except you eat the flesh of the son of man, and drink his blood, you shall not have life in you... For my flesh is meat indeed : and my blood is drink indeed* (1).

APPLICATIONS. Read these words over and over again and meditate on them. What enlightenment, what sweet and noble feelings you will obtain from them. — You will find in them the best preparation to enable you to communicate with great fruit.

AFFECTIONS and RESOLUTIONS. As in the preceding Point.

POINT III. — THE EFFECTS FOLLOWING THE INSTITUTION OF HOLY COMMUNION.

CONSIDERATIONS. These effects, as testified by the same Evangelist were, first, on the part of Our Lord : a far greater tenderness for His Apostles, proved by these words : « *Filioli* » — *Little children* (2), a term which He had never used before, — *Abide in me, and I in you* (3). Secondly, a far greater candour with them, as they themselves testified. *Behold, now thou speakest plainly, and speakest no proverb* (4).

These effects on the part of the Apostles were — a greater purity of soul : *You are clean* (5) :

(1) John, vi, 49-56. — (2) Id., xiii, 33. — (3) Id., xv, 4. — (4) Id., xvi, 29. — (5) Id., xiii, 10.

— a greater understanding of spiritual things *Now*, they said, *we know* (1); — a greater attachment and devotion to their Divine Master for they all exclaimed with St. Peter : *Though I should die with thee, I will not deny thee* (2).

APPLICATIONS. You also will experience these salutary results according to the measure of your dispositions, and your fidelity to the practices recommended in the two preceding meditations. Therefore be faithful to them.

COLLOQUY. With St. John Berchmans, who obtained so much benefit from his frequent Communions because he prepared himself with such extreme care.

FOURTH MEDITATION.

THE PRECIOUS PLEDGE

GIVEN US BY JESUS CHRIST IN HOLY COMMUNION.

I. *Prelude*. Hear Jesus Christ saying these words : *If thou dost know the gift of God* (3).

II. *Prelude*. Ask for grace to understand the precious pledges given us by Jesus in Holy Communion.

POINT I. — PLEDGES OF INFINITE LOVE.

CONSIDERATIONS. To carry love for a friend to the length of sacrificing a fortune is rarely seen ; to the length of sacrificing liberty and consenting to undergo captivity for him, is yet more rare ; but of sacrificing life by going to death instead of him is unheard of. Jesus our Divine Lord has done all that for us, and yet that was not sufficient for His burning

(1) John, xvi, 30. — (2) Matt., xxvi, 35. — (3) John, iv, 10.

love. He desired besides to become our Food in Holy Communion, and to transform us into Himself, by becoming as it were, of the same substance as ourselves : *He that eateth my flesh... abideth in me, and I in him* (1), He says.

APPLICATIONS. A few moments more and Jesus will come to give me in Communion this pledge of His unspeakable love. What pledge of gratitude shall I give Him in return? *Lord, what wilt thou have me to do* (2)? He answers : *If any man love me he will keep my word* (3). Be constant in loving me, be ever ready to sacrifice all things : your possessions, your liberty, you very life, rather than lose my grace, or even grieve Me by committing the slightest deliberate venial sin. Have I always had these dispositions? — Have I them now? — or usually? What does my conscience tell me?

AFFECTIONS. I shall earnestly ask Jesus in this Communion to strengthen these dispositions in me.

RESOLUTIONS. So long as I have not obtained this fruit from my Communions, I shall count all else as nothing.

POINT II. — THE PLEDGE OF GLORIOUS RESURRECTION.

CONSIDERATIONS. *We shall all indeed rise again* : says St. Paul, *but we shall not all be changed* (4). The bodies of the just will be resplendent, active and impassible : those of the

(1) John, vi, 57. — (2) Acts, ix, 6. — (3) John, xiv, 23. — (4) I Corin., xv, 51.

damned will be monstrous, heavy and susceptible of every kind of suffering. For *they that have done good things shall come forth unto the resurrection of life; but they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of judgment*, says St. John (1). This is a terrible alternative in which we are all concerned. How happy would a man consider himself were He given a pledge of glorious resurrection. Let us rejoice, for this precious pledge is given to all in Holy Communion. The seed is laid in our flesh. This is the teaching of the Church, repeated by the priest every time he says these words after Holy Communion : *O Sacred banquet... in which we are given the pledge of future glory* (2) — an allusion to these words of Jesus Christ : *He that eateth my flesh... hath everlasting life : and I will raise him up in the last day* (3).

APPLICATIONS. What is better suited to make us desire Holy Communion than the thought that it will secure not only for our souls, but also for our bodies a life of glory and eternal happiness. And we can attain the highest degrees of that glory and happiness. St. Paul says, so that in the same way in which we see the innumerable stars in the heavens distinguished from one another by their greater or lesser brilliance, so will some of the bodies of the elect rise more resplendent than others. *For star differeth from star in glory : So also is the resurrection of the dead* (4).

(1) John, v, 29. — (2) Antiphon after giving Communion before Mass (this is the antiphon to the Magnificat for second vespers on Feast of Corpus Christi). — (3) John, vi, 55. — (4) I Corin., xv, 41-42.

AFFECTIONS. Acts of faith and hope concerning these consoling and encouraging truths.

RESOLUTIONS. To maintain in yourself a great desire for frequent Communion, but to seek advice from your director nevertheless in regard to this.

POINT III. — THE PLEDGE OF A HIGH DEGREE
OF GLORY IN HEAVEN.

• CONSIDERATIONS. How does Holy Communion secure an increase of glory and happiness for us in heaven, besides a glorious resurrection? A very simple explanation will enlighten us. According to the Gospel, the glory of each soul and its capacity for enjoyment will be in proportion to the merit of its good works : *Then will he render to every man according to his works* (1). Now it is charity alone which gives a supernatural merit to our good works, and the greater our charity is, the greater our merit. On the other hand, the immediate and principal effect of Communion being to increase our charity, it obviously follows that by frequent Communion we are certain to find immense treasures of merits, and a high degree of glory in heaven.

APPLICATIONS. Weigh this motive well, uniting it to many others, and you will be ever more and more strengthened in your resolve to approach the altar often and with devotion.

COLLOQUY. With St. Stanislaus Kostka, who had the happiness of twice receiving Holy Communion from the hands of angels.

(1) Matt., xvi, 27.

FIFTH MEDITATION.

THE WONDERFUL EFFECTS

OF HOLY COMMUNION.

I. *Prelude.* Hear Jesus Christ saying these words : *Except you eat the flesh of the Son of man... you shall not have life in you* (1).

II. *Prelude.* As for grace to understand and above all to experience the wonderful effects of Holy Communion.

POINT I. — IT PRESERVES AND INCREASES THE PURITY OF OUR SOULS.

CONSIDERATIONS. It is an article of faith that in Communion many venial sins are remitted to those who receive it with fitting dispositions, and that for the same reason it purifies the soul from many stains which dim its beauty in the eyes of their Lord. Again, it is of faith that it preserves them from relapses into sin, in the first place by lessening the violence of passions and obstinate temptations, the two sources of our sins ; then, by infusing fresh light into their souls it enables them to see more clearly the hideousness of sin, and inspires them with a greater horror of it ; and finally by communicating to them fresh strength to resist the attractions of sin. That is the cause of the wonderful purity of soul which is found in many Christians who have to live amongst the temptations of the world. It is frequent Com-

(1) John, vi, 53.

munion that bestows this grace on them. What wonders has it worked for you?

APPLICATIONS. In order to obtain this precious effect of Communion in all its fulness, follow the excellent practice of St. Aloysius Gonzaga if you, like him; have the habit of communicating every Sunday. He strove to spend the first half of the week in a holy way, to testify his gratitude to Jesus, and the second half, the Thursday, Friday and Saturday, he prepared himself as thoroughly as he could to communicate again. Follow his example, and Holy Communion will be for you, as it was for him, an infallible means of obtaining a high degree of purity of heart and great perfection.

AFFECTIONS. Thank St. Aloysius for having left you such a beautiful practice. Beg and implore him to obtain for you the determination to be faithful to it.

RESOLUTIONS. To try this practice for some weeks at least.

POINT II. — IT MAINTAINS AND INCREASES THE STRENGTH
OF OUR SOULS.

CONSIDERATIONS. Not only does Holy Communion keep our souls pure and beautiful in God's sight, but it communicates besides a marvellous strength. Our Lord wished to point out this favourable effect by giving Himself to us under the species of bread and wine. But how does Communion contribute to the strength of our soul? It is not difficult to understand: in fact, as the life of the body depends on its union with the soul, in the same way the supernatural life of our soul depends on its union with God by the bond of charity. The closer this

union is, the stronger the soul. Now, by Holy Communion, says St. Cyprian, the soul acquires a more intimate union with Jesus Christ, than that which is caused by the fusion of two particles of wax into one. Our Divine Lord testifies to this wonderful union when He says : *He that eateth my flesh... abideth in me, and I in him* (1).

APPLICATIONS. Let us give thanks to God, and let us acknowledge with humble gratitude that if our courage and constancy have not failed in several difficult circumstances, it is owing to frequent Communion. Again, it is in Communion that we should find the strength to persevere until the end in the path of salvation.

AFFECTIONS. Gratitude. — Appreciation and fervent desires for Holy Communion.

RESOLUTIONS. To communicate as often as a wise director advises, but always with great care and devotion.

POINT III. — IT ENNOBLES AND PERFECTS OUR SOULS.

CONSIDERATIONS. A more wonderful effect of Holy Communion than the two preceding ones is that it transforms us, so to speak, into Jesus Christ by making us live by His life, by making us like Him by anticipating that which, according to St. John, we shall one day be in glory : *Like to him* (2). This is what St. Thomas explains admirably in the following comparison : *In the same way that the young shoot from a good tree, grafted on a wild stock takes from this one all bitterness and makes it bear*

(1) John, vi, 57. — (2) 1 John, iii, 2.

good fruit similar to its own, so the Body of Jesus Christ being engrafted as it were, on our own, corrects our imperfections, communicates to us His goodness and the virtue of producing fruits of justice like unto those He Himself produces (1). Is there anything else that can ennoble us to that extent?

APPLICATIONS. Let us rejoice at the thought of the immense benefits which are contained in Holy Communion. But we must never forget that the share we shall have in them will always be in proportion to the preparation and good dispositions we bring to it. They are indicated in the first meditation of this series (p. 653-656). Let us put them faithfully into practice.

COLLOQUY. With Our Blessed Lady who was raised by God to such exalted honour, and to such great perfection at the moment of the Incarnation of His eternal Word, when she received within her the same God and Saviour Whom we have the happiness of receiving in Holy Communion.

SIXTH MEDITATION.

THE WONDERS EFFECTED IN US

BY JESUS CHRIST WHEN HE GIVES HIMSELF
TO US IN HOLY COMMUNION.

I. *Prelude.* Hear King David speaking in a prophetic spirit : *He hath made a remembrance of his wonderful works (2)*

II. *Prelude.* Ask for grace to appreciate the wonders contained in the Holy Eucharist.

(1) Opus. 58, chap. xxv. — (2) Ps. cx, 4.

POINT I. — THE MIRACLE OF LOVE.

CONSIDERATIONS. *Greater love than this no man hath*, says Jesus, *that a man lay down his life for his-friends* (1). He had decided to give us this proof of love from the time of His entrance into this world. But death would separate Him from us and He could not consent to this separation. Though He was to die for us, yet He desired to dwell with us until the end of time, and, what passes comprehension, to give Himself to us as our Food, to nourish us with His Flesh and Blood. How has He effected all these wonders of love? By instituting the Holy Eucharist and Communion.

APPLICATIONS. How many times have these wonders of God's love been renewed in you? Count if you can, the number of your Communion and then ask yourself what marvels of devotion and generosity for Jesus Christ they have accomplished in return, — or rather, how it is that you are still so lacking in fervour and generosity in His holy service. — Seek for the cause. — Strive to remedy it.

AFFECTIONS. Humiliate yourself profoundly in the Presence of God. — Sincerely ask for pardon. — Awaken in your heart an ardent desire to correspond with the love of Jesus in a more worthy manner.

RESOLUTIONS. Never to leave the holy Table without having laid there the offering of some generous sacrifice as a proof of your love.

(1) John, xv, 13.

POINT II. — THE MIRACLE OF POWER.

CONSIDERATIONS. The miracle of God's Omnipotence is shown no less strikingly in Holy Communion than that of His love. The efforts of human understanding will never be able to sound their depths. Who will ever be able to understand how it is that under the appearance of bread which is no longer bread, we really receive Jesus Christ, Body and Soul, the same as He is in heaven? — How many other millions at the same moment receive this same Jesus Christ without however His being divided? — How that, the Host being parted, Jesus Christ is whole in each part, even in the smallest perceptible particle? — How when the accidents of bread have disappeared, Jesus Christ is no longer in the Host?

APPLICATIONS. However impenetrable and impossible all these miracles may seem to us, we believe in them wholly and absolutely and the merit of our faith is all the greater before God since, not only do we believe that which we do not see, but we believe it contrary to the evidence of our sight, taste and senses; this constitutes perfect faith.

Let us take advantage of this easy opportunity of increasing the treasure of our merits by making frequent acts of faith on these ineffable mysteries, either aloud, or by demonstrations of respect by genuflecting or inclining our heads devoutly before the Blessed Sacrament, or before any Church where It reposes.

AFFECTIONS. Acts of faith, — admiration, — adoration.

RESOLUTIONS. Since my God has performed so many miracles to come to me, I will make every effort to prepare myself to receive Him as worthily as possible.

POINT III. — THE MIRACLE OF PATIENCE.

CONSIDERATIONS. Another miracle which occurs to the mind of all those who reflect on the horrible outrages committed against Jesus in the Holy Sacrament of His love, is the patience with which He bears them. Taking into consideration the outrages committed in Communion alone, how numerous and revolting they are! Outrages on the part of impious people who make use of the Eucharist for the most horrible profanations; outrages on the part of heretics who make it the object of their blasphemies; outrages on the part of Catholics, for how many there are who have nothing but disdain for Communion; how many who approach it with reluctance, with revolting lukewarmness, or even with the knowledge that they are bringing Jesus into a heart possessed by a devil. And Jesus does not revenge Himself. He endures all these insults, and He has borne them for centuries with invincible patience.

APPLICATIONS. Always keep in mind the thought of this miracle of patience and gentleness, and you will labour with more strength and success to correct your irritability, your abruptness and your bad temper, if only with the desire to give some consolation to the desolate Heart of Jesus. Offer Him some generous resolutions to-day in Holy Communion.

COLLOQUY, an outpouring of love for Jesus Christ.

For more ample matter most of the chapters of Book IV, of the *Imitation of Jesus Christ* can be used, principally the chapters (1) 1 — 2 — 4 — 7 — 13 — 14 — 16 — 17.

FEAST OF ST. JOSEPH ⁽²⁾.

(March 19th.)

I. *Prelude.* See St. Joseph holding Jesus by the hand, and gazing lovingly on his most chaste spouse.

II. *Prelude.* Ask for grace to grow in your esteem and love for St. Joseph.

POINT I. — THE EMINENT DIGNITY AND GREAT POWER OF ST. JOSEPH.

CONSIDERATIONS. In order to form an idea of the eminent dignity and the great power of St. Joseph, reflect that in the eternal decrees of God he was called to the most exalted and holy position, namely, to be the spouse of the Mother of God, the adopted or legal father of the Son of God made Man, and head of the Holy Family; and that he was entrusted with the secret of the Divine Incarnation. Reflect that

(1) These chapters in the form of prayers contain deep and luminous thoughts which can be used as matter for numerous meditations. The numbers which divide them are like so many Points which can be preceded by the *Preludes* indicated in the preceding meditations. — Nearly all these chapters can be used as *Colloquies*, either before, or after Communion, by means of slight modifications.

(2) These meditations of fixed date could not be placed in the series of meditations of the 1st. volume, as it does not follow the order of the calendar.

God always proportions the gifts of His grace to the dignity to which He raises those whom He is pleased to raise; reflect that St. Joseph, to whom the Holy Spirit gives the title of Just — *Joseph... being a just man* (1), co-operated most faithfully with the abundant graces he received, and in this way he was able to amass immense treasures of merit and sanctity. Then reflect that the degree of eminence of the Saints in glory is proportioned to the degree of their merits, and you will conclude that after the Mother of God, St. Joseph is the nearest to the Eternal Throne, and that His intercession must be in a certain manner, all-powerful. How is it possible for Jesus to refuse anything asked of Him by the one whose will He obeyed in all things on earth?

APPLICATIONS. We can infer from this that our confidence in St. Joseph cannot be too great; that we shall never address him in vain. This belief is strengthened by the extraordinary, and it may be said innumerable favours obtained by the invocation of this Saint, favours attested by trustworthy witnesses, by St. Teresa amongst others. She says : *I cannot call to mind that I have ever asked him at any time for anything which he has not granted; and « I am filled with amazement when I consider the great favours which God has given me through his intercession. To other Saints, she adds, Our Lord seems to have given grace to succour men in some special necessity, but to this glorious Saint, I know by experience, to*

(1) Matt., i, 19.

help us in all : and Our Lord would have us understand that as He was Himself subject to him upon earth... so now in heaven He performs all his petitions » (1). What a mistake then it would be if we failed to have recourse with unbounded confidence to St. Joseph in all our necessities.

AFFECTIONS. Rejoice with St. Joseph. — Thank him. — Place yourself in his hands.

RESOLUTIONS. To propagate devotion to St. Joseph. — To invoke him in all our necessities with the utmost confidence. — To inculcate this confidence in others.

POINT II. — THE INDESCRIBABLE HAPPINESS
OF ST. JOSEPH.

CONSIDERATIONS. No others Saint participated, nor ever will participate in the happiness which fell to the share of St. Joseph : an ineffable happiness during his life and at his death. Not only had he Our Lady as a help and inseparable companion for thirty years, but for the same length of time he lived under the same roof as Jesus, in the sweetest intimacy with Him. In fact, he had to labour in the sweat of his brow to procure what was necessary for the family he had to support, and he was not exempt from tribulations, but the thought that he worked for Jesus, that Jesus witnessed his weariness and his trials lightened them for him, or rather changed them into joys. His life in this valley of tears was like an anticipated paradise. And his death ! — how sweet it was ; how full of

(1) Chap. vi, of her life.

trust and assurance! He died in the arms of Jesus and Mary. — That explains all.

APPLICATIONS. You envy the happiness of St. Joseph, but you can share it if you will. Be devoted to our Blessed Lady, and you will have her as a helper and consoler; offer Jesus all that you do and suffer in your home, and you may be sure that you will not only have Him as a witness, but also that He will reward you. Does He not assure you of eternal life as the prize for your fidelity and love, and should not this assurance banish far from your spirit, the fear of death with which you are sometimes beset? At that supreme moment, what may they who have invoked and honoured him in a special way throughout their lives, not hope to obtain from the protection of St. Joseph, the special patron of a good death; who have endeavoured to please Jesus Whom he so loved on earth, and from Whom he can obtain everything in heaven? With these thoughts let your heart rejoice, and in order to be ever more and more certain of the powerful protection of St. Joseph, consecrate yourself once more to him on this great day of his feast. Promise to make fresh efforts to imitate his humility, his obedience, his patience and assiduousness, his resignation and piety; take up again your practices of devotion with fresh ardour in his honour, particularly that of frequently having recourse to him as the special patron of a good death, by means of the indulgenced prayer: Jesus, Mary and Joseph, assist me in my last agony.

COLLOQUY. With St. Joseph.

THE FEAST OF THE ANNUNCIATION

OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN.

(March 25th.)

I. *Prelude.* Imagine the archangel Gabriel announcing the mystery of the Incarnation to the Blessed Virgin.

II. *Prelude.* Ask for grace to be penetrated with dispositions suitable to this great feast.

POINT I. — WHAT GOD DID FOR MARY ON THIS DAY.

CONSIDERATIONS. What did God do in favour of Mary on the day of the Annunciation? — He sent her one of the most exalted princes of His celestial court, the Archangel Gabriel; he made known to her that she had been chosen from all eternity to be, according to human nature, the Mother of His Eternal Word. He crowned the measure of all the favours which He had previously granted to Mary, by communicating fulness of grace to her, thus raising her in merit and sanctity above even the Cherubim and Seraphim. He effected in her the ineffable mystery of a God coming to dwell among men. All these Divine favours are recalled to day in the Gospel of the Mass : *The angel Gabriel, says St. Luke, was sent from God into a city of Galilee, called Nazareth, To a Virgin... and the virgin's name was Mary. And the angel being come in, said unto her : Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with thee : Blessed art thou among women... Thou shalt*

conceive in thy womb, and shalt bring forth a son : and thou shalt call his name Jesus (1)... Then after the angel had dissipated Mary's anxiety regarding the preservation of her virginity, she gave her consent in these words : *Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it done to me according to thy word* (2). And immediately, according to St. John's expression, *the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us* (3).

APPLICATIONS. A great many practical reflections naturally occur to our minds here : First, Mary, crowned with grace, elevated in dignity above the Seraphim, is full of the thought of her nothingness, naming herself only *the handmaid of the Lord*, « *Ecce ancilla Domini* » : and I, with no merits and full of imperfections and sins, consider myself superior to others ; I nourish pretensions, ambitions. — Secondly, Mary recognises the great things which have been effected in her, but as we see later in her answer to Elizabeth's congratulations, she sees in them nothing but the gratuitous gift of God : *He that is mighty hath done great things to me* (4) : yet I look upon the little good that there is in me as personal merit, and seek to glory in it before men. — Thirdly, Mary was more anxious to please God by preserving her virginal purity than to have the honour of Divine maternity : yet I have so little fear of tarnishing the purity of my soul in God's sight.

AFFECTIONS. Remind your dear Mother of all

(1) Luke, 1, 26-31. — (2) Id., 38. — (3) John, 1, 14. — (4) Luke, 1, 49.

that God did for her on this day. — Rejoice with her, and implore her to share with you, a poor wretched sinner, the fulness of the graces with which she was filled. — Ask her in particular for humility, which drew the Son of God to her, according to St. Bernard's remark : If she pleased God by her virginity, it was through her humility that she conceived Him (1).

RESOLUTIONS. Convinced that this anniversary reminds my Mother of the happiest day of her life, as all her honours date from this day, I will believe that she must be disposed to give my prayers a more favourable welcome than on any other day ; and I will ask much from her with unbounded confidence, not only for myself, but also for all those who are dear to me, and for my Mother the Church.

POINT II. — WHAT GOD DID FOR US ON THIS DAY
THROUGH MARY.

CONSIDERATIONS. What is it that God did for us to-day through Mary? He proved His Infinite love by giving us His only Son : *By this hath the charity of God appeared towards us* (those who are in the world) says St. John, *because God hath sent his only begotten Son* (to be a passible and mortal Man) *that we may live by him* (2). And it is through Mary who became a Mother on this day without ceasing to be a Virgin, that He desired to give Him to us : *Mary, of whom was born Jesus* (3).

APPLICATIONS. As fruit of this anniversary,

(1) Hom. II. on *Missus est*. — (2) 1 John, iv, 9. —
(3) Matt., i, 16.

let us enter into the dispositions with which the Church wishes to inspire us. Let us revive love in our hearts towards God the Creator, our heavenly Father; gratitude towards the Eternal Son of God made Man for us; filial devotion towards Our Blessed Lady, who became the Mother of God on this day; let us strive moreover, to practise our love by endeavouring to do the Will of our heavenly Father more faithfully, for it is no other than our sanctification: *This is the will of God, your sanctification* (1); our gratitude by honouring the ineffable humiliations of the eternal Son of God in His Incarnation, by esteeming and practising humility; and our filial devotion towards the Mother of God and our Mother, by imitating her as much as is in our power.

COLLOQUY. With the Blessed Virgin. — Thank her for the part she took in the work of redemption. Beg her to be the interpreter of your gratitude with her Divine Son, and to help you to show this gratitude by your deeds, and by a more constant fidelity to your good resolutions.

FEAST OF ST. ALOYSIUS GONZAGA ⁽²⁾.

(June 21st.)

I. *Prelude.* See the Saint full of joy on his death-bed.

II. *Prelude.* Ask for grace to imitate his generosity in order to participate in his happiness.

(1) 1 *Thess.*, iv. 3. — (2) Born 1568. — Entered the Society of Jesus, Nov. 1585. — Died, June 21st, 1591. — Beatified 1605. — Canonised 1726.

POINT I. — THE GENEROUS EFFORTS OF ST. ALOYSIUS
TO ATTAIN PERFECTION.

CONSIDERATIONS. When we read of the heroic deeds of the Saints we say to ourselves, perhaps unconsciously : It is not surprising for they were saints and I am not; — as if saints had been born saints, and as though they had not attained that height by making generous and often heroic efforts. We see the traces of these efforts through all the pages of St. Aloysius' life. There we read that in order to conquer the straying of his imagination during prayer, he persevered for whole hours therein until he had spent one without distractions; that to conquer his propensity for anger he watched with so much vigilance over all his impulses, that he became able to prevent the first inclination to anger; that to kill every movement of vanity and self-love in himself, he decided to appear at a festival at the court of Mantua mounted and dressed in such a way that it aroused the laughter of the courtiers. And what great efforts he made to keep his soul free from the least stain! He went the length of never looking in the face of a woman; of mortifying his body by continual fasting, by harsh disciplines, by vigils prolonged far into the night; and what a struggle he had to endure for two years to enable him to renounce his princely estate and enter religion!

APPLICATIONS. These few characteristics are sufficient to convince you that the sanctity of St. Aloysius Gonzaga was not natural or innate, but acquired at the cost of most generous efforts;

and that you too can become a saint under the same conditions. Are not these thoughts consoling and encouraging?

AFFECTIONS. Beg and implore St. Aloysius to obtain for you great energy of will, so that you may put into practice the many means of salvation which are placed at your disposal.

RESOLUTIONS. To encourage myself in difficult moments as did St. Aloysius by saying : What will this profit me for eternity?

POINT II. — THE PERSEVERING EFFORTS OF ST. ALOYSIUS
TO ATTAIN PERFECTION.

CONSIDERATIONS. St. Aloysius was eighteen years old when he was admitted to the Society of Jesus in Rome. From the time he entered this novitiate, and during the two years he spent in it, he constantly directed all his efforts without any relaxation, to the end he had in view when he left the world, namely, to accomplish the work of his sanctification. Therefore his progress for these two years was astounding. It was no less afterwards, thanks to the invincible constancy of the Saint, a constancy which was his until the end of his three months illness, until the time of his death ; it was then that he asked with tears that the discipline should be given him, and that he should be laid on ashes on the ground, so that he might die as a penitent.

APPLICATIONS. You may also have said for years : I want to be saved, to be sanctified ; you may have begun to make efforts, and progress has attended your efforts ; but little by little, your constancy has failed : on different

pretexts your efforts have relaxed and progress has ceased. — Perhaps after a retreat, you have taken courage again, and made fresh efforts; but these efforts have not been lasting. This explains the little progress you have made during the past years in the school of Christian perfection and holiness.

AFFECTIONS. Acknowledgment. — Sorrow. — Recourse to the clemency of God. — Humble supplications.

RESOLUTIONS. To recall your good resolutions, and put them into practice with renewed fervour.

POINT III. — THE REWARD FOR THE EFFORTS MADE
BY ST. ALOYSIUS TO ATTAIN PERFECTION.

CONSIDERATIONS. In return for his generous efforts St. Aloysius received a sublime gift of prayer, the gift of tears, perfect chastity, and a great many other special favours. Amongst them, he received one in which we should above all desire to participate — his holy death — preceded by wonderful peace, joy and assurance, as attested by the letter he wrote eight days before his death to his virtuous Mother. In it he says; If charity makes us weep with those who weep, and rejoice with those who rejoice, your consolation will be truly great, my very dear Mother, for the grace given you by Our Lord in my person, leading me to true blessedness. Divine Goodness calls me to heaven, to that supreme happiness which I have sought so negligently. I am promised the reward for the few tears I have shed! — All his letter expresses the same sentiments, as well as the last conversations he had with his Superior

and his brethren. All were lost in wonder, and said amongst themselves that they were present at the death of a Saint. It pleased God to attest the sanctity of His servant by striking and numerous miracles.

He was solemnly placed among the beatified only fourteen years after his death, during the life-time of his Mother.

APPLICATIONS. Let us live as Saints, and we shall participate in their blessedness.

COLLOQUY. With St. Aloysius Gonzaga.

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